NEW TIMES

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The Riga OMON: "We shall return!"

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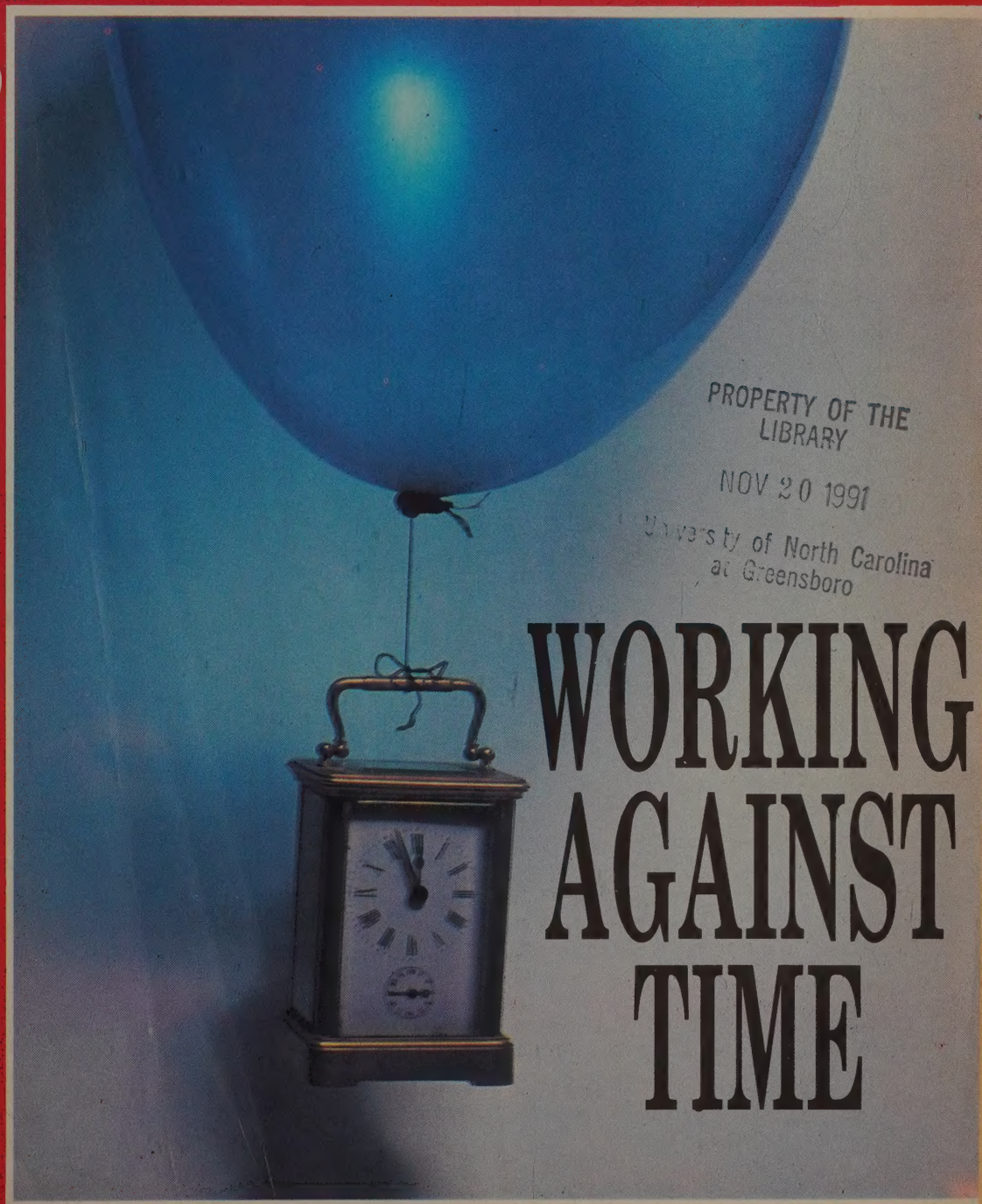

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LEONID TISHKOV

A SOVIET WEEKLY

NEW TIMES

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From our mailbag

■ In an article called "The mystery of plane number 256" (No.32, 1991) I read that Lin Biao, the Chinese Minister of Defence, was killed in a plane crash. Since the Lin Biao "case" was, and still is, to a certain extent shrouded in mystery, I would like to make some remarks and add new details.

It would be quite fantastic to assume that Lin Biao flew to Taiwan to visit Kuomintang men against whom he fought for more than thirty years (provided, of course, there was no preliminary conspiracy – but in that case the whole course of events should be changed). There is also nothing unusual in the position of the bodies found at the site of the crash: they were lying face up, fastened by the belts to their seats. As to the pilot, he might, due to the blow, have been thrown off in the crash.

Moreover, Yao Wenyuan was not Mao Zedong's son-in-law: those rumours were spread during the "Cultural Revolution" and were denied afterwards.

Now I would like to stress the main point, namely, the reasons explaining the divergence of opinions between the "Great Helmsman" and his "heir." It is true that they fought for power, and that certain measures were taken to keep the army positions strong. But the author overlooked a very important fact. In the early 1970s the Mao Zedong-Zhou Enlai duo started active preparations for a drastic reorientation of China's foreign policy towards its rapprochement with the West. In practice this was realized in 1972, soon after Lin Biao's death. The Minister of Defence, for his part, vigorously opposed "Soviet revisionists" and "American imperialists" alike. It is quite possible that, after all, Lin Biao was much more disposed towards the Soviet Union where he had been treated for tuberculosis for a long time and, apparently, quite successfully.

Various publications appearing in the press from time to time as regards the details of Lin Biao's "conspiracy" against Chairman Mao and attempts to kill him arouse nothing but utter amazement at the supposed plotters' amateurish approach. But life is a curious thing. And if we are to learn the whole truth, it will hardly be in the near future.

V.Sorokin, professor
Moscow, USSR

■ I read with great attention the article "A poet and the czar? (No.32, 1991) about the trial of Turkmen poet Shiraly Nurmuradov, member of the Akzyberlik Society, who had been officially charged with swindling. The poet had been accused of extorting big sums of money from his acquaintances. In the article I have come across my surname which, like my name, has been misspelled.

True, my old friend Shiraly Nurmuradov did borrow 1,000 rubles from me, which fact I confirmed during my talk with the investigator. Somewhat later I was summoned to court where I declared that Nurmuradov had been unlawfully arrested. Afterwards a virtual persecution campaign began: they asked me to testify against the poet at his next trial. I was supposed to call my friend a swindler. One cannot help but be amazed and bewildered! Shiraly's wife gave me back the money before the trial, and I said that I had no claims against Nurmuradov since he never decieved me. Had it been in my power, I would have let Shiraly Nurmuradov free right away. But, alas, I have no such power.

Nonetheless, I think that the authors of the article did not give the matter sufficient attention. It goes without saying that legally Nurmuradov is not a criminal; it is common knowledge that he was framed by party *apparatchiks*. But why did the authors – Memo-

Colleague, you are not right...

■ Dear editor-in-chief!

In your issue No.36 you published an interview with Vladimir Matusevich. The interview contains some points as regards the BBC broadcasting during the abortive coup of August 19-21. In particular, Konstantin Isakov, whom Matusevich granted the interview, intimates that Radio Liberty was the only radio station which could "give our people the truth about the events" in the USSR. Vladimir Matusevich tacitly agreed with Isakov, and added that the BBC had broadcast the news of Gorbachev's death.

But these declarations are not true. First, BBC correspondents, like their Radio Liberty colleagues, regularly reported from the Russian White House. Second, the BBC gave no information about Gorbachev's death.

We hold that neither Konstantin Isakov nor the editorial staff should have accepted Vladimir Matusevich's unfounded words in all good faith. It seems to us that Isakov and the editorial board are guilty precisely of what they blame us for: of using, as Vladimir Matusevich said, "unconfirmed data only for the sake of..."

We request that you publish a denial.

Naturally, we would like to hear your apologies for publishing that unconfirmed data and read the text of the denial with all the necessary apologies published in Russian, English and German in one of your next issues.

Respectfully,

David Morton,
Head of the Russian Service, BBC
London

From the editors: We offer Mr Morton our apologies and take this opportunity to express our respect for the high professionalism of our BBC colleagues as well as those from Radio Liberty...

Radio Liberty and the BBC meet in *New Times*

Non-professionals prepare assassinations

A "czar" is not a God, but nur is a poet an angel

rial Society members – say nothing about undeniable negative features of Nurmuradov's character? The poet had been "taking" money from his friends and acquaintances under various pretexts since 1984. Undoubtedly, there was no *corpus delicti* in his actions, but surely a man should have some scruples! How was it that members of the Akzyberlik democratic movement appointed such a man treasurer of their organization? Be that as it may, but Shiraly Nurmuradov should be released immediately. Rumours are now being spread by some of Akzyberlik Society members that Nurmuradov was convicted because of my testimony at the trial. But it is an open secret now how Communist party leaders managed to sentence writer Obrazov, to put poetess Kekilova into a lunatic asylum for her anti-Brezhnev pronouncements, to put Professor Kosayev behind bars. The list could be continued. Have all of them been sentenced on account of my testimony?

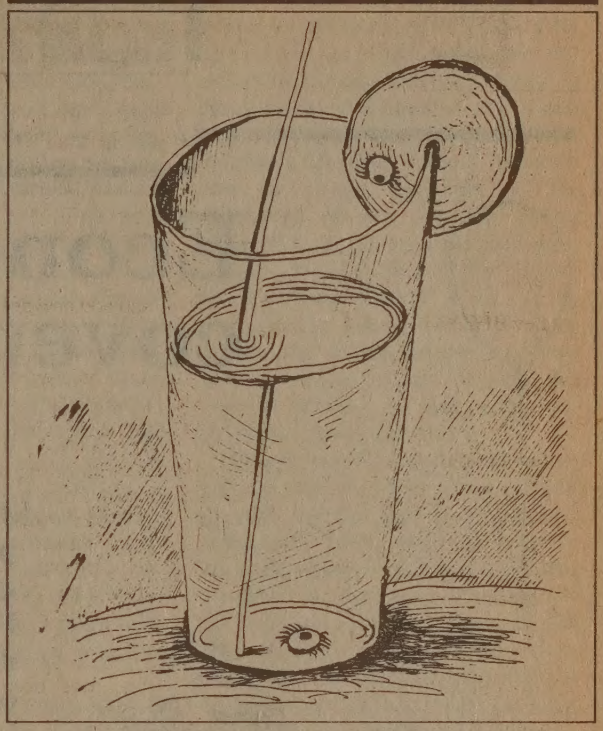
Amanmurad Ussayev
Ashkhabad, USSR

■ Democracy is liberal. It proceeds from pluralism, presupposes the necessity of opposition and rejects witch-hunting. Our present-day writers, the so-called national patriots, who used to frighten the most jittery readers with the mythical "Jewish-Masonic" conspiracy and who in actual fact played into the hands of Kryuchkov and Yanayev, now behave as heroes. Not so long ago they victimized Boris Yeltsin and other democrats on the pages of "patriotic" publications and now they are swearing their allegiance to and practically forcing themselves on the President of the Russian Federation. Will the Trojan horse really enter the White House?

A new alliance is being formed (beginning from Sergei Baburin and Viktors Alksnis to Vladimir Zhirinovsky and the Pamyat (Memory) society under the neo-populist slogan of defending ordinary working men. One should not be a prophet to realize that those people would shamelessly speculate on the chaos inherited from totalitarianism they had so vigorously defended. Furthermore, it would be democrats – and not those "patriots" who seek cushy jobs in the "shadow economy" – who would pay for current inflation, empty shops and interethnic conflicts. I do not think that there will be another putsch. But the danger of a "crawling" reaction ready to cash in on the moods of the despairing people not versed in politics is there for all to see. Let me remind you how in 1933 Hitler legally came to power in Germany by skilfully taking advantage of the difficulties, playing on the wounded national pride and exposing "corrupt" democracy. That is why in the conditions of victorious euphoria (which, by the way is rapidly evaporating) democrats should stick together. Moreover, at the time when the reaction is closing its ranks, all the democratic forces should unite. Also of great import is national education. And, of course, the country should be dug out of the economic mess.

B.Gilenson, professor
Moscow, USSR

THE WAY I SEE IT



Drawing by Victor Bogorad

■ Our people inflict obesity upon themselves simply because their taste-buds are bigger than their will power. On the other end of the scale there are those who search in hunger and can find almost a three-course meal in a city rubbish bin.

In Australia, statistics reveal increasing cases of child abuse and incest.

Our youth forget their self-importance and often turn to drugs, suicide, and crime... They see a dark side in the West that even democracy cannot cure.

Ann Little
Gatton, Australia

***Compiled by* Tatiana Chernova**

It's better to keep the informers' names secret...

■ Recently the newspaper *Diena* published an interview with the last chairman of the Latvian KGB, Edmunds Johansons.

Asked if the KGB stopped all its activities, Edmunds Johansons replies: operative are only cipher message service and government communications. Any operational work and cooperation with informers are prohibited. As a result, the former KGB chief believes, it is practically impossible to prevent crimes – be it contraband, organized crime or violations of economic laws. The activities of the services that controlled air and railway transport have also been stopped.

There are five agencies in Riga that have been subordinated to the KGB of the USSR. Their main task is to ensure communications. The future of the agencies will be decided by special commissions to be set up for the purpose. For the matter concerns considerable material values, and it would be naive to think, Johansons believes, that Latvia would have them as a gift. Probably, the republic will be offered a chance to buy back the secret equipment (since it belongs to the USSR) or it may be moved out of the republic.

The archives of the Latvian KGB consist of two parts. The first part, dealing with criminal cases, has already been handed over to the Main Archives Department. Edmunds Johansons holds that the materials containing information on KGB informers should be destroyed, as has been done in Lithuania: "people who start a new life in a new state should feel secure." Otherwise, we will witness new witch-hunting, and face government and parliamentary crises. "How can we blame a man who, by providing necessary information, prevented a criminal offence?"

Edmunds Johansons pointed out in the interview that instead of the old KGB there will be a new state security agency in Latvia which will try to win popular trust, the old organization never enjoyed.

People not wishing to work in the new Latvian secret service may apply for a job with the USSR KGB. The new secret service in Latvia will hardly need the service of informers in Moscow.

Ivars Rozenbergs
Yelgava, Latvia

POLITICAL LIFE

Economic union – cover for national interests

A common economic space has been proclaimed. At the same time Russia is going to introduce "striped" bank notes. Prices are liberalized to stimulate the decline of output. As before, Russia has its own way of development

Marina Shakina

Has the process got off the ground? Will changes really begin in the next few days? Only one radical change took place in our country this year. The Communist Party was ousted from the political arena. But even this change did not influence political life substantially. True, the party has disappeared leaving behind sumptuous buildings and confused financial affairs. But it is speculative knowledge for us. In other domestic affairs everything remains as it was when the Communist Party was the master of the country.

The first session of a new Supreme Soviet of the USSR has opened. It is attended by deputies from 7 of the former 15 constituent republics. It is a real fact. An economic agreement has been signed by 8 of the 15 republics. This creates some certainty, at least. But what's next? The impression is that the nation eagerly waits for its leaders to show it the way to the truth. For several months the Russian parliament had been hammering out the bill on indexing the incomes of the population, and again put it aside. The members of

Drawing by Peep Pedmanson

parliament felt dispirited. Is it worth adopting a law on indexing if hyperinflation is expected in Russia in the near future?

On the threshold of what?

I have a feeling that both the Union and Russian parliaments are occupied with something needless. The hapless Union parliament, elected only two years ago, has already undergone one rotation. Its chairman is under arrest and the parliament constantly hears reproaches that it is not needed. Of late the Union parliament has been reformed on the principle of quota representation. The latest operation has muddled things completely. Will the mutant, born in pains, live long? Moscow has recognized the independence of the three Baltic republics. Five more republics have "fallen out" of the Union structures by refusing to send delegations to the new Supreme Soviet. What will the shrunken parliament engage in when each republic is independent and has its own legislation? Moreover, each republic has brought under its control everything on its territory. The new Union parliament will probably turn into a consultative body or survive as such until the conclusion of a Treaty of Union, if we live to see it at all.

The ceremony of signing the economic agreement took place a few days ago. Specialists are still arguing whether it was real action or merely a simulation. Boris Pinsker, an economist regarded as an extremist and a neo-Bolshevik, believes that the agreement is no more than a protocol of intentions. "Its economic value is zero," he said. "With the help of the agreement the republics pretend to be busy with something. In fact, they are going with the current, though they pretend that they are swimming."

The intrigue with the signing of the economic agreement ended in an interesting way in Russia. The resignation of two top officials and the return of President Yeltsin from his holiday kept the public in suspense for two weeks. Speaking before members of parliament and journalists, Secretary of State Gennady Burbulis, whom many analysts try to understand and label now as "a grey cardinal" now as Yeltsin's "alter ego," brought home the idea that the economic agreement is not beneficial to the Russian Federation. Nevertheless, on returning from vacation Yeltsin supported the agreement, though he called for a further elaboration of it and an early signing of 17 additional protocols.

This did not confuse the State Council and the Secretary of State. As before, they are active. Perhaps they are even more active than the President. Devised as a body of strategic policy, the State Council seeks to justify its existence. It has ambitious plans and advocates a different spirit in the relationship between the parliament, the government and the President. The new spirit was expressed best of all by Yeltsin's adviser, Sergei Shakhrai, chairman of the parliament's committee for legislation. "The team spirit, not the drawing up of multi-volume programmes, should dominate in the leadership," Shakhrai said. "Opposition is good in parliament only." Pluralism, alternativity, and parity constituted the essence of the main slogan in the past. Today the new slogan calls for forming a body of people who have identical ideas.

Commenting on the composition of the Russian delegation to the new parliament of the USSR, Ruslan Khasbulatov frankly said that "we are not going to create an opposition to ourselves in the Union parliament for the sake of sham democracy." The delegation was composed only of deputies who are considered democrats.

Solo for Russia

Having abandoned the idea of forming a government of national concord, about which Yeltsin spoke only recently, the democrats decided to rally their forces. Everything indicates that a real centre of power is taking shape around Yeltsin. In any case, all political ideas made public by the President of Russia are first expressed by his advisers or the State Secretary at meetings, conferences and press conferences in the Russian parliament building. However, Yeltsin does not accept all the ideas proposed by his advisers. However, members of parliament support some of these ideas. For instance, the idea that Russia should proclaim its independence, expressed by Gennady Burbulis, is favoured by deputies and is likely to come into the open again, though the President has hushed it up.

It often happens that ideas publicly "tested" by the State Council are then used by Yeltsin. For this reason the ambitious speculations about Russia's future role in the world community, disclosed by Burbulis recently, should be given serious consideration. Is Russia preparing to perform a solo? In the opinion of Gennady Burbulis, Russia is able to impart dynamism to the negotiating process with the United States and contribute to the implementation of President Bush's latest proposals. The State Council is drawing up proposals for nuclear arms cuts in the country and the proportions of reduction, as well as on how to divide the weapons between the four nuclear republics of the former Union.

Perhaps there is a division of labour between the President and the State Council, one that they have agreed on beforehand: Yeltsin takes part in discussions on economic cooperation between republics, on the Treaty of Union, on the common historical, political and economic space while his advisers act as custodians of Russia's national interests? The dialogue between them gives birth to a presidential decision.

Anyway, Yeltsin did not succumb to his advisers who were not satisfied with the economic agreement. In his TV address he lifted the veil over Russia's economic policy for the next few months. It can be characterized by three main notions: the liberalization of prices, introduction by Russia of its own money, and the discontinuation of subsidies to the central ministries not mentioned in the economic agreement. Yeltsin added by way of excuse that these were unpopular but inevitable measures.

"Unemployment is urgently needed"

So the frightening liberalization of prices, the need for which was pointed out by radical economists, is about to happen. Yeltsin's statement leaves many questions, however.

"Yeltsin's proposal is nothing new," says Doctor of Economics Anatoly Matlin. "For instance, the liberalization of prices was planned by the Ryzhkov-Abalkin cabinet. Yeltsin should give thought to the fact that by virtually continuing the policy of his opponents he, like his predecessors, follows the wrong track. First, a decision is made to introduce free prices and then plans are made for

stimulating the producer. The majority, if not all, of our enterprises are monopolies. They operate without risk and competition. In conditions where state-owned enterprises run no risks and do not answer to anyone the prices will go through the roof. If enterprises jack up prices so high that no one will buy their products, they will simply begin to cut output, which in fact, is already happening."

A rather strange situation is arising. While talking about common economic space and signing an economic agreement, the republics are taking measures to protect their markets. For a long time Russia displayed restraint with regard to the statements and actions of its neighbours. Today it is setting up its own custom-houses and is going to issue its own money – rather contradictory measures from the standpoint of preserving the Union. As regards bank notes with a red-white-and-blue stripe, it is most likely that another branch of "shadow" economy – the printing of such money – will be organized in Russia and perhaps outside it, especially as the technology needed to draw the stripe on the familiar depreciated bank notes will hardly be very complex. The most skillful craftsmen may even prove sharp enough to make bank notes with a replaceable stripe.

The discontinuation of subsidies to Union ministries and departments spells unemployment. All of them are concentrated in Moscow and, if Yeltsin keeps his promise, tens of thousands of former employees looking for work will appear in the capital within several months' time. Besides, ministries are connected with enterprises, half of which have run into debt, that is, they are not profitable. Does the Russian leadership know what to do with these enterprises? After all, ministries were the linchpin in this system and somehow managed to fulfill coordinating and information functions. A spontaneous breakup of whole industries might begin. Unfortunately, it seems that the present democratic leadership does not have a thought-out package of measures for an economic reform.

Yeltsin's statement on the liberalization of prices and the proposed issuing of "striped" bank notes has not yet evoked analytical and lively comments. The media praised the President for calling a spade a spade. Perhaps Yeltsin's steps are not the most fortunate now. But it is better to take such measures before we pass away waiting for politicians to find an optimal path. After all, Yeltsin is moving in the right direction.

"Russia should have embarked on this path a long time ago," the above-quoted Boris Pinsker thinks. "The liberalization of prices, the issuing of Russian bank notes, and the dissolution of ministries are good measures. But it is merely a distant approach to the problems. Most essential today is wholesale privatization of everything. The state should retain a minimum of property. All property should be turned over to citizens free of charge or for a symbolic payment. Of course, this path will meet with strong resistance, and I don't envy the Russian leadership. Unemployment will foster the greatest discontent. The President will hear demagogic groans about the achievements of socialism. It will be very difficult to stand these trials, though unemployment is what we urgently need."

The worth of an agreement

Some are jubilant over the conclusion of an economic agreement, regarding it as the first step towards a new political unity. Others predict an early withdrawal of the Russian Federation from the Union. In spite of cheers for the economic union, the picture seems contradictory. The only obvious success of the agreement lies in the fact that for the first time in the past few years the republics, although not all of them, have at least agreed on something. A treaty is something which looks respectable in the eyes of the world public. However, there are considerably more problems than evident successes. Even when politicians demonstrate good will and readiness for cooperation, real and life treaties are different things. The latest striking example of this statement is the Zheleznovodsk communiqué on the Karabakh problem. Politicians celebrated a success while "militants" and riot police exchanged fire as before.

It has already been noted that the economic agreement is not concrete enough and, more importantly, does not contain the mechanism for its implementation. Will it be put into effect? For apart from leaders of the replublics there are parliaments which will have to ratify the agreement. The Russian parliament has already demonstrated its "obstinacy" by turning down Yeltsin's request to postpone the election of the heads of local administrations, and so the President was compelled to use a veto. Stung by the fact that it is ignored in the adoption of cardinal decisions, the parliament is increasingly inclined to adopt the stand of principled opposition to the President of Russia.

The republics want to enjoy all the benefits of economic unity without waiving their independence. It is a utopian vision. What will prevail – the process developing so far irrespective of the will of the republican leaders or the determination of politicians to curb this process? Western experts estimate that of all the republics only Russia can survive by itself.

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Seven in one boat, not counting the central government

What will the new Union parliament do?

It has proved very difficult to do a simple sum – to add one to eight or nine, the central government to eight or nine republics. The group of nine republics which agreed to reform the Union has dwindled while the central administration led by Gorbachev is becoming a zero.

After two attempts, the first session of a new Soviet parliament opened in the Kremlin on October 21. Only seven republics sent their delegations to the new parliament, one less than the number of republics which signed the agreement on economic cooperation. The greatest loss is the absence of the Ukraine. Taking advantage of the post-coup situation, Kiev sharply changed its attitude to Moscow and Russia on the whole.

At first glance the republics, or rather new sovereign states from the former Union, behave illogically, continuing to suspect the central administration, of great-power ambitions even now they have reduced it almost to zero, and simultaneously trying to get hold of the skin of the decrepit imperial lion. However, upon taking a closer look, we shall see a peculiar but quite definite logic. All republics are vitally interested in how to drag themselves out of the economic precipice as soon as possible. But, to all appearances, they are not convinced by the argument that this can be done more easily by joint efforts. In theory, they are prepared to accept this argument. In reality, they hint that the precipice is not so deep and that they will get out of it independently if they are not asked to help their neighbours. It is difficult to escape the impression that even the agreement on economic cooperation was signed by republics not because they were convinced of the need for it, but because, considering the agreement not very binding on themselves, they do not want to look like wreckers of the Union. They also expect some possible benefits from it, at least in the form of Western credits and investments which may not be received at all if the Union breaks up completely.

The republics are now represented in the two chambers of the new parliament – the Council of the Union and the Council of Republics. In the second chamber, each republic has one vote. It is also an upper chamber which approves laws adopted by the Council of the Union and ratifies international agreements and treaties.

In short, no one exerts pressure on the republics. Nevertheless, an allergy to any manifestation of central power is increasing. The desire for complete independence, to get rid of fraternal shackles today prevails over reason.

It may be asked again in this connection whether the Union parliament, personifying the central administration to some extent, is necessary at all. In the present situation it is unable to do anything except, as the publicist Yuri Chernichenko acidly noted in an interview to the American TV "determine the size of Kremlin sandwiches or the colour of the ties worn by deputies."

The laws and decisions passed by the Union parliament are not binding on the republics. What is the point of law-making, then? The parliament will not decide what kind of a Union should be formed. Even Kirghizia opposes a political union. Political debates held publicly with a stormy reaction to any angry word or suspicion can only exacerbate the discord.

What powers are today exercised by the central government? The republics have cut short allocations for culture. What about defence and armed forces? The Ukraine and Kazakhstan sometimes want to be non-nuclear republics and at other times, very reluctant to give advantages to Russia, refuse to part with nuclear weapons on their territory. The Ukraine and Azerbaijan uncompromisingly declare the nationalization of all armaments on their territory. What can the Union parliament decide in such circumstances?

The Union parliament does not decide foreign policy matters either. Each republic seeks to establish its own international ties. It seems the West is absolutely confused and does not know with whom to deal and at what level.

Can the Union parliament influence the implementation of its programme – the acceleration of economic reforms, prevention of crisis in the financial sphere, privatization and a radical land reform? These important problems are solved by other institutions. In the meantime republics are beginning to introduce their own currencies and financial power goes to national banks. The economic union is in danger.

It seems that sooner or later, the sooner the better, we have to admit the bitter truth: before uniting the republics must first become separate. Of course, the republics have many common historical ties and ties in the political, economic and cultural spheres. But they will no longer exist as a single state.

Drawing by Victor Zhivansky

Gennady Ariyevich

No change in Karabakh

Nikolai Kalinkin reports from the besieged Armenian village of Karachinar

This report almost cost our special correspondent his life, when a rocket exploded some three metres away. He was injured and suffered a concussion, but four villagers were killed that same day

In the trenches of Karachinar

Operation Ring, so strongly associated with the villages of Getashen and Martunashen has become a household word. It was more or less "successfully" implemented by the joint forces of the Azerbaijan riot troops, the soldiers of the USSR Interior Ministry internal forces, and the Fourth Army of the Transcaucasian Military Region against the inhabitants of some twenty odd Armenian villages in Karabakh. No armed resistance was offered anywhere except by the villagers of Erkech, Manashid and Buzlukh. When Col. Budeikin's 23rd Motorized Rifle Division came to the riot force's support, the resisting villagers retreated. The hostilities conducted by the military units and the riot troops to modify Karabakh's demographic lineup and oust Armenians from the "contiguous districts" were suspended after the abortive August putsch, when the Azerbaijan authorities lost the Centre's backing. The troops were obliged to retire to their bases and in mid-September the villagers of Erkech, Manashid and Buzlukh took back their villages with relative ease from the riot troops who now had no army support. However, any implication that life there has returned to normal is out of the question as these villages are regularly bombarded by heavy artillery and sniped at. Hostilities continue.

Night-time burials

At the end of September, evidently vexed and hoping to completely evict its residents, the entire fire power at the disposal of the Azerbaijan riot force was concentrated in Karachinar, a village to the east of Azerbaijan's former Shaumyan district. Karachinar, which of late has received frequent mention in the media, strictly speaking consists of the three villages of Gakhtut, Manasishen or Yenikend and Karachinar proper with a total population of 3,500. When I arrived, I found one out of every three houses destroyed – which does not include demolished farm sheds or shattered windows. Some houses had been hit by three if not four shells.

Ever since April Shaumyan district has had no electricity or communications, no fuel and no sugar, as shops are absolutely bare and civil servants do not receive their pay. Due to this complete siege, the womenfolk and their children have nowhere to flee and as a matter of fact have nothing on which to drive out, as no petrol is available. All that can be

An armoured carrier left by the Azerbaijan riot force, who thus arm the Armenian "gunmen"

done is to evacuate them to neighbouring villages. Over the past two months more than 30 people have been killed in this area.

By the time I entered Karachinar shelling had been going on for some 40 minutes and my ears were deafened by the incessant explosions. I definitely concluded that there were casualties and for that reason headed towards the first aid point. However, hardly had I crossed the street, with about three more metres to go, when there was a fearful crash and an Alazan rocket, having hit the wall, exploded in front of me. Twirling and catching hold of my camera, a relic from my father, I fell to the ground. The hush that followed was broken in the next few seconds by the tinkle of shattered window panes crumbling around. Unable yet to see anything, I sensed a deadened pain in two or three parts of my body. In my imagination I saw my body riddled with flying splinters, stretchers, and an operating theatre. I stumbled towards that same place but from a totally different quarter. Having eventually come to my senses, I examined myself. My injuries seemed but a trifle that would be forgotten at best in a fortnight, if, of course, my wounds were not due to an exploding rocket. I spent the rest of the day and the next day shaking my head much like a horse trying to get rid of gnats, futilely attempting to exude a kind of seemingly woolly substance from ears and head. I must say that a concussion, even a minor one, is horrible to live with.

The Alazan rocket is the most "inocuous" of all fired against Karachinar. Bombardment is conducted mainly from 122-mm howitzers and ack-ack guns. Hence I think I was lucky, as the nearly two-hour-long bombardment cost the villagers four lives, one of a woman. They were not "going over the top" or firing from ambush. They were unarmed. They were killed by their homes having failed to take cover in time. In violation of local Christian tradition, they were buried the next day as nobody was sure riot troops would not burst into the village in a few hours' time, and then it would be impossible to bury the dead.

The two religions are of increasing significance in Karabakh, with the Christian Russians and Ukrainians supporting the Armenians as the inscription on the gates indicates

However, as the cemetery is on that slope of the hill facing Azerbaijan, and is within full view of the riot troops who never deny themselves the dubious pleasure of firing upon a "moving target," local residents bury their dead only at night.

Weird TV sequences

The Baku TV programme so curiously called *Guarding Law and Order* was presenting a report from Karachinar's neighbouring Azerbaijan village of Shefek. The highlight was termed "Repulsing the attacks of Armenian gunmen."

In the eyes of its makers the main character in this sequence, a stalwart riot trooper, was repulsing perhaps the last attack in his life by firing his submachine gun through the embrasure. True, one did not see any attacking gunman, but let us not be too carping. What I want to say is that I must have re-run the respective tape at least some six times. I took off my eyeglasses, put them on again, rubbed my eyes, stopped the frame and re-ran the tape again and again. I was not mistaken, the submachine gun had **no clip!** Now since I am not prone to believe in miracles, I will categorically assert that Azerbaijanian televiewers are being hoodwinked in the best Nevzorov style.

A list of such instances could be given. As a matter of fact, in another sequence in the same report the TV reporter, approaching a ragged line of riot troopers, asked: "What weapons do you employ to **defend** yourselves?" We hear: "We've got only two tractors, one **tank** plus submachine guns. But if need be, we'll use other (save the mark!) weaponry. Come what may, we'll not yield an inch of ground to the enemy."

What ground do they not intend "to yield"? If it be the village of Shefek, then they need have no fear, as the Armenians in the neighbouring village have no claim on this particular village and even emphasize that they have always had amicable relations with their neighbours, who are almost their fellow villagers. In the final analysis, it is not the Armenians who are besieging the Azerbaijan village, but vice versa. Evidently implied is the Armenian village of Karachinar, whom the Bolsheviks incorporated in Azerbaijan.

Russian tractors for Azerbaijan riot troops

Out of the bitter experience gained in Getashen and other evicted villages, and loth to be scalped by the riot troops, the people of Karachinar are ready to resist even with bare teeth. Thus the octogenarian swinging his ancient gun in defence of his native village, is well nigh run-of-the-mill.

In the trenches I spotted young lads barely 15 years old. There were even some women, those who know what to press so that their guns shoot. Having spent only several days with the people of this besieged village, I still need time to recover. For me it was much easier, as I knew I would be leaving soon. They, though, have nowhere to go and stay on. This includes even the womenfolk and the children. Gradually they are decimated and their houses are destroyed. What with the shelling and bombardment they cannot take in the crops and during the winter siege will go hungry. Still they stay on.

Looking through a pair of binoculars, I spotted three howitzer guns on the slope beyond Shefek. I also saw there a hail-dispelling station with three ack-ack guns that shoot out shells crammed with pins and bolts. The riot force commands two mobile Alazan mortars. They also use the NURS and PG–7L rockets, splinters from which I took back home with me, along with armour piercing bullets fired at the village from the DSHK large-calibre machine gun. In the TV report mentioned earlier, the riot troopers themselves said they had armour at their disposal. Thus General Sokolov, commanding officer of the Fourth Army of the Transcaucasian Military Region, transferred 100 armoured carriers to the Azerbaijan Interior Ministry. Are they for police detection? Or for catching more criminals? At the recent session of the Azerbaijan parliament the republic's leader Ayaz Mutalibov proudly announced that the Yusif Kasumov engineering plant in Baku had started manufacture of armoured carriers mounted on tractors supplied by the Russian Federation (save the mark!). 30 such carriers have already been produced.

A couple of days before I arrived in Karachinar, the riot force launched an assault behind a T-54 tank and two armoured carriers. Encountering fierce resistance, they retreated.

A colleague of mine, who went to Getashen in early May immediately after the eviction of the villagers, told me that he had seen chalked up on house gates the names of the new proprietors with the mark OMON, which means riot force. In the villages of Erkech, Manashid and Buzlukh one may see the same, however without the "OMON" mark. Now and again, though, the "settlers" are forced to vacate the seized houses. Fleeing from these villages, the riot troops left behind two ack-ack guns and a caterpillar tractor, that had been re-made into an armoured carrier. In this fashion they gradually arm the Armenian "gunmen."

Home of the Guilistan Peace Treaty

The latest developments warrant the firm assertion that the notorious "passport check" in the process of which, incidentally, no passports were ever checked, is nothing but sheer bluff, a pretext to terrorize Karabakh's Armenians. Now, though, Azerbaijan's authorities do not even try to look for a more or less decent pretext to send riot troops into action. Though I cannot know what is said on this score in Azerbaijan's corridors of power, the published statements made at its parliament's session on September 29-30 are expressive enough. I shall now quote from the newspaper.

Ayaz Mutalibov. Over the past two years we have achieved much in Nagorny Karabakh: (...) The Azerbaijan population in the region has increased. (Not a word is said that to that end the Karabakh villages devastated by the riot troops were forcibly settled moreover often by owners of costly flats in downtown Baku! – **N.K.**) Our police should pay notice to Nagorny Karabakh rather than establishment of law and order in Baku or to the suspension and banning of meetings.

Mamed Asadov (Azerbaijan's Interior Minister). The population has been evicted from some 20 Armenian villages that are of strategic importance for Armenia... In the evicted villages 262 Azerbaijanians were killed and another 1,000 wounded by Armenian gunmen. (...) In Karabakh currently there are 5,000 Soviet troops and we operate conjointly with them. But if the Centre recalls these troops we will be obliged to recall our own 100,000 Azerbaijanians from military service.

Insofar as it is impossible to lead a normal life in the area of hostilities, there are thousands of refugees including Azerbaijanians as well. Thus the Azerbaijanian village of Shefek, that has found itself between the hammer of the riot force and the anvil of the resisting villagers of Karachinar is but one of the numerous victims of the Baku politicos. There are hundreds of casualties on both sides, hundreds of orphans and widows, hundreds of destroyed houses, hundreds of crippled lives, hundreds of scorched fields. Today though, when the Centre is no more, it is exclusively the Azerbaijan leadership that is responsible for the riot troops' atrocities.

The people of the Shaumyan district impressed upon me that it was in their homeland where the Guilistan Peace Treaty was signed, under which Karabakh was incorporated into the former Russian empire. They mentioned that with sad yearning and are willing to vote even for Zhirinovsky or for the devil himself, only to lead a normal life. They feel they have been forgotten and sold out by Russia. Is that really so?

■

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Business, Russian style

Tatiana Ivanova

Sell a big flat for a lot of money plus a small flat, use the money to buy a country-house, rent it for convertible currency, etc., etc. How should we learn to live this new life?

Let me relay a conversation overheard in a trolleybus.

"You know what," said one, "I'll sell my room. Imagine the money I'll get for it? After all, it's in downtown, got a high ceiling, what's more with mouldings. The whole thing is 25 square metres, with a huge window and it's on the second floor. For the money I'll get, I'll buy myself a little house out in the sticks, plus a little truck, an old run-down one, which I'll tune up so that it shines, you know what I can do, and I'll put on the side the legend "Carry Anything." If furniture, or spuds for the market, I'll load it for you and unload it for you. Or if you want me to take you to the local discotheque and call for you late in the evening, that'll be no problem. Just show me the colour of your money. As for the missus, I'll get her to start a kitchen garden. True, let me tell you I hate grubbing, but the missus she'll be doing something useful. The grandchildren'll be coming out for the fresh air and the berries, and as for the old man I'll take him along on that truck. It's a new life that's beginning, see?"

Having listened to this monologue without interfering, except for a couple of ahs and ohs, the other one chimed in:

"You know what? I'll sell my room too, and shack up with Nadka. She'll be as pleased as punch to have me with her. After all, you know Nadka, don't you? Each time I go, she's in tears begging me to stay on. 'What,' she says, 'don't you like it with me? Don't you find it good?' So I'll buy her a brooch for a present, cause if I have the money, why not?"

As they exited, I got a good look at the two. Both sturdy, good-looking, fortyish, one a bit tipsy, the other quite sober.

Indeed, a new life is truly beginning for the Muscovite. It's called "privatization."

A foreign term for us, which makes things rather hazy to understand. When they tell us that flats are to be our own, that's clear. But when they add that you can register in whomever you like, sell that flat, get a lot of money for it, and buy yourself a smaller, simpler flat, or that you can will your flat to daughter or grandson, then it becomes fascinating. Because the thing is that if I put my vase on the sideboard, it'll stay there. No longer will it be that when I kick the bucket the housing administration will get the busybodies to chuck out all my cups and spoons, my favourite frocks, my books, that vase with the sideboard. No longer will strangers be living where I used to live, and erase every sign of my presence. That means that my grandson, who's currently serving in the army as an officer, and who's having a hell of a time with lodgings, can come with wife and daughter, and thank granny, which means that granny hasn't spent her life in vain.

It's a pity though, that thus far the two overheard on the trolleybus won't be able to launch their enterprise as yet. Only flats, not rooms, are privatized for the time being. However, that'll come. There is a lot that'll come, only not many realize that so far. They will, though, with time. Moscow City Hall has taken the first serious step towards a normal life.

Most don't understand at all what a market economy means. Overwhelming Communist propaganda and the completely ruined miserable national economy share the blame for the fears and incomprehension felt over this time of transition to a market economy. After the August 21 victory the situation has changed, though. We are happy even that the mass media no longer try to scare us and stir up hate for the entrepreneur. On the other hand, it is sad to see that so far no intelligent things are told as to how we are to live, become businessmen, and get rich. Evidently no one can do that, as even we, the writing folk, are also of local stock and for the time being also have nothing but a smattering.

But intuition suggests that the time is ripe for entrepreneurial activity. In this country everything is needed but nothing is there. We read about auctions at which shops are leased for years for millions of rubles. Only a few can do that. Though we won't ask where they got their millions of rubles from, what are the others to do? By my metro station is a shiny stall selling cigarettes and tobacco. The lazy vendor opens it for no more than an hour a day, puts out two brands of expensive cigarettes and then puts up the shutters. She goes, no doubt feeling worn out. So couldn't somebody buy that stall, bake cakes at home and sell them there? Or perhaps vend home-made knitware? Or start a place to exchange second-hand children's goods? Or, finally, vend whatever local residents would like to sell, those stacks of soap piled up during the run on the shops, or home made jam, and pickled mushrooms or the toys with which the kids are fed up?

So where are such stalls and kiosks sold? Where can one secure a licence to sell under one's own umbrella at the door to an exhibition? Why generally are those vast grounds of the erstwhile exhibition of the erstwhile achievements of the erstwhile economy so desolate? City Hall isn't summoning there the businessmen who want to do business and get rich. It doesn't tell them to make use of this place where thousands of people go and want to eat, drink, buy icecream, souvenirs and toys, in short, spend their money. But there's nothing there to buy.

Indeed, where is one to buy that little run-down truck which is to "Carry Anything"? Where is one to buy an old written-off bus, to transport owners from the railway station to their countryhouses? Or to come up to the crowd at the bus stop and shout: "Get in everyone who has a ruble to get to Strogino"? Can't an old-age pensioner start caretaking for the house he lives in, so as to keep the place tidy, do errands for the residents, call out the handyman whenever necessary, arrange a vending point on the landing, and hire a janitor or lay him off if he does a bad job? How indeed is one to sell one's big flat for a lot of money plus a small flat, move to some new place, spend the money to buy a countryhouse, rent it for convertible currency, purchase a xerox and start a copying office? How is one to open an office to help all who don't understand a thing about business, those citizens who become owners, to undertake what I've just suggested?

A fascinating time, isn't it?!

To beat or not to beat

– that is the question

Vitaly Ganyushkin

The leading figures of our country continue even now, after the global superstress, to try to make us believe that any forms of violence, repression and terror in respect to one's political opponents, not to mention those who merely think differently, are absolutely unacceptable and ruled out. We have, allegedly, learned it already and know what it leads to...

Surely, it sounds alluring in our red-hot atmosphere of intellectual pluralism and attempts to form at least a semblance of a "legal space"! Of course it would have been nice finally to agree on something, and to set up at least a tolerable coexistence with N. Andreyeva and with Polozkovs and with Zhirinovsky and Alksnis. And with the junta octet too... Why not, aren't they, in the final analysis, nothing more than the above-mentioned "political opponents"? It's true, they have been a bit hasty, they have chosen the wrong methods of realizing their ideas. Well, such things can happen to anyone. But otherwise they are "ours" too, in the final analysis, of course.

But it's precisely here – and our class instinct doesn't betray us – that the notorious doggy lies buried: the dictum about our "having learned it already" turns out to be rather fraudulent. Try to answer the simplest question: who repressed and terrorized whom, and for what, those days when we had the chance to learn it? Prosecuted, repressed, terrorized and simply liquidated were none other than just us, common Soviet people, our closest predecessors who dared raise not their hands, of course (those days such things could not even be thought of, God forbid!), but only their voices against the intolerable decades-long oppression and violence, to which the communist usurpers of power subjected the "new socialist community" consisting of a hundred-odd peoples.

They not only duped generation after generation, from the cradle to the grave, according to the prescribed standard of commonness, and reduced to a xerox copy everything talented, above average, or free-thinking which tried to rise above this common level. They also let rot in prison cells and barracks and, with an express class enthusiasm, rent the sculls of exactly those to whom the *nomenklatura* first gave the shameful, in its opinion, nickname of "dissidents" and whom now that dissidentship has taken the upper hand, it rebaptized "democrats," a no less indecent label (see *Pravda* and the like).

In the meantime, during all these years of anguish under communist rule, not a single hair has fallen off any of the million heads of the hydra of partocracy, state bureaucracy and their innumerable watchdogs and yes-men both from among workers – to be more exact, workers' aristocracy – and the intelligentsia. Their bloody crimes and obscene acquisitiveness did not even arouse suspicion, not to mention prosecution and punishment, because the criminals themselves impersonated law and administered justice and punishment. Even when they were caught in the nets of mass repressions against free-thinkers it happened not because of their convictions, but exclusively as inevitable waste and losses in the internal Party intrigues. The only serious attempt – and even that was rather oblique – to stem the appetite (in the word's most literal sense, since it concerned the inordinate foodstuff allowances from special distributors) of this hydra was at one time made by one of our successive supreme leaders among a series of his other nice initiatives. We all know only too well what his end was like – this we have "learned" too.

And now that this hydra, driven into a corner but still in enviable health, has again lifted its fire-spitting heads, when a new act of real civil courage of the self-same "dissidents" and "democrats" has been necessary to cope with this crawling enmity, we have blushed like a maiden, shy and sentimental. We have been scared by our own audacity. Complaints about witch-hunts have begun, which we "have studied," too, and demands to take our "hands off the communists" have already been voiced. There is no examination, let alone investigation, of the activities even of those figures in local bureaupartocracy who, at the very first call, rushed to expropriate farmers and tenants living in hostile surroundings, to mete out punishment to disobedient deputies, to trample down the sickly sprouts of democratic movements and finish up their leaders. Why worry about trifles and prosecute everyone and everything once the key figures are arrested; the rest are nothing more than mere pawns, albeit unduly zealous; Mother Democracy will teach them right and wrong. The most important thing for us is to deploy a legal space where not only Shevardnadze and Yakovlev, but also the underground Party bosses with Baklanov's golden shoulder-looped academicians and Starodubtsev's socialist latifundists might equally freely breethe and act.

Yet exactly the opposite opinions are expressed in the very same "camp of the good ones" – we should't be so unreservedly triumphant about our victory, only the fiercest attack of the reactionary forces has been repelled, a new assault must be expected... Well, we are used to expectations. And this time they will not let us down, no doubt about it. The same valorous guys with steel-strong muscular convolutions and infallibly operating chewing machines will come – no simpletons, the next time they will not miss! In fact, this legal space is the only thing they lack in order to carry out the next putsch "well organized and without losses." On their side, of course.

This is not a call to vengeance, still less to

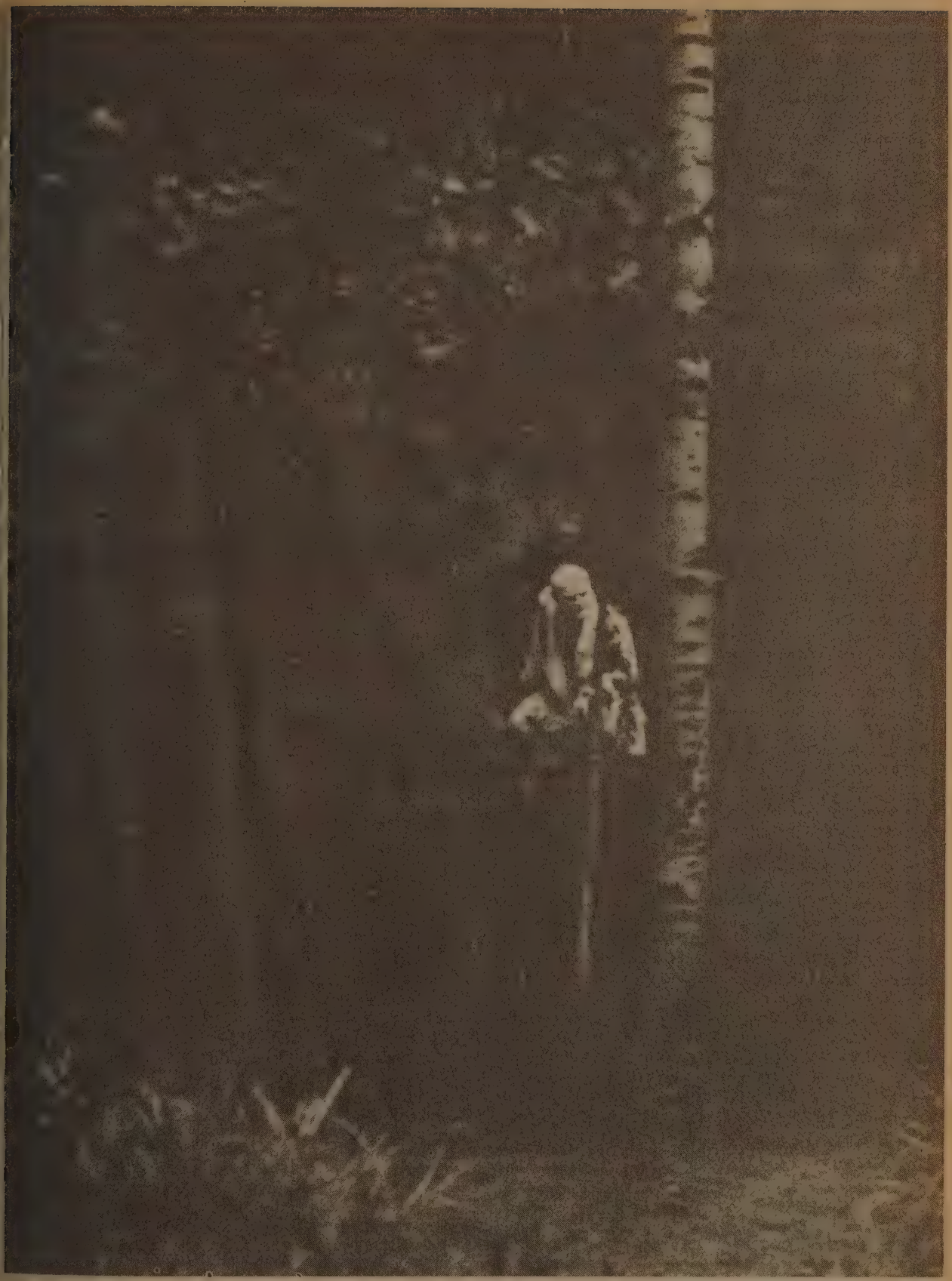


Photo by Dmitry Borko

total mob law. Nor to the axe is Russia called – but to vigilance. This is a call to common sense – to the instinct of self-preservation, after all. It's not the logic of taking an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but that of struggle and perseverance, since nobody on the other side, "in the trenches," has so far surrendered to discretion. They have only concealed, camouflaged themselves, gone to the forests in order to confer in their comfortable guerrilla dugouts, regroup the ranks, catch their breath and grease the weapons...

Inexorable logic has crowned the ill-conceived *perestroika* with an ill-conceived putsch

Of course, it is necessary to hold accountable those who were directly involved in criminal activities and to judge them according to the full strictness of the law. But how about those who didn't "show up" in the events of those days but who rejoiced in their hearts and began clanking hand-cuffs designed for their opponents? What about those who even now make our life unbearable by their merely sitting at their innumerable tables in innumerable cabinets, who turn us into mere rags to trample upon? Even a chair of a big boss is not needed for that purpose – suffice it to be a mere scoundrel who has a chance to exercise his authority over our lives at the moment. Legion is their name! And they still dominate us, from a taxi driver unwilling to seat passengers for the prescribed fee to an office rat demanding that you must certify you are still alive. They dominate us, turning our life into an endless sequence of gibing and humiliation. It's precisely these who, together with the cannibals in the mahogany cabinets, still personify for us that very "order and discipline" which the putsch was going to make up happy with. What should be done with them?

Of course, neither a firing squad nor even shackles are necessary here. The free ones will never degrade themselves so low. However, muzzles and calked dog-collars would be quite fitting. All of them must be kept on a short leash, lest they arrange a new disaster.

Inexorable logic has crowned the ill-conceived *perestroika* with an ill-conceived putsch. But there might have been, and there still may be a real putsch. How can it be prevented? By complete dismantling alone. Not only by removing all those who encouraged the putschists – that goes without saying – but by cleaning out everything that promoted the putsch. By removing all that is still smouldering under the ashes and is still capable of a revanche. Suffice it to remember that during the siege of the Reichstag, Hitler's warriors, just short of being utterly smashed, prepared a return assault on their already lost lair. Can we today, in the name of dubious moral chains, afford to leave the nation and society resting on a volcano ready to erupt? No. All this party-and-state mafia, all this Nomenklatura of the Proletariat must be kept on a chain, not in attendance of a verdict – no thirst for blood is implied – but for unconditional and irrevocable exposure, capitulation and removal from the scene of a democratic revolution.

So how lightmindedly and prematurely did our democratic circles begin to affirm that they had already crushed the administrative commanding party-bureaucratic system! Nothing has yet been crushed! It functions perfectly well, represented by both persons and structures, from Moscow to the most remote corners. This is testified to by the so far unaborted putsch which matured in its womb. This is testified to by our entire country, which is one endless empty counter where there are "no eggs and not expected" and where anyone who tries to produce anything to fill this counter will be immediately muzzled. Exactly like in the good old pre-*perestroika* time – you may steal as much as you can manage if you are careful enough not to be caught, but God forbid you should try to do something useful – nobody will allow you to.

Not every CPSU member is a self-seeker. But every self-seeker is a member of the CPSU of necessity

However, I can refer to a more competent testimony. I wonder if you have noticed a publication in one of *Pravda*'s recent issues, rather unusual for both its source and the newspaper chosen. A document, headed "The threats to security and the necessity of common actions" was, according to the paper, prepared by the KGB analytical service and distributed among a group of deputies to the new Supreme Soviet. A copy of it somehow reached the France-Presse news agency and was published by the former flagman of Soviet press with reference to this agency.

It's written there in black and white: "The authors of the document emphasize in the chapter 'The factors enhancing threats to security' that the functionaries who supported the putschists remain in high posts in the upper echelons of power to this day." The KGB believes that the "situation in the armed forces is as hazardous today as it was on the eve of the putsch," and that the situation is equally explosive in the military industry, "the majority of whose leaders supported the putschists." And in conclusion, the document expresses concern with the forming of "social circles favouring creation of right-wing, even fascist, political parties, while the development of liberal and reformist parties is proceeding very slowly."

It's probably a good omen that the Committee for State Security begins, it seems, to be preoccupied with state security, too. But security as such is, to all appearances, not for it to deal with. Hence the appeal to the deputies to urgently work out "a common security convention."

But what can the deputies do, even if democrats prevail among them (which is still highly uncertain)? Moreover, the democrats themselves, with their as yet immature structures, hurry to be built into the indestructible mechanism of commanding everyone and everything. It even begins to seem that nothing more has been provided for by Providence itself, that it is God's sanction for all the mortal sins committed by the owners of one sixth of the planet.

Just consider that these deputies of all levels have done almost nothing of practical importance in order to undermine the vital basis of this danger the KGB warns us about and of its carriers, nothing to free from its vigilant eye our labour, energy, enterprise, to grant us the right to private property so natural for a human being, and the possibility to dispose of the fruits of our labour and intellectual power! Mankind's experience of many centuries has inculcated in us the simple truth that democracy with all its human rights is no more than a delusion as long as the human being as such owns nothing. And not one of our leaders on a more or less important scale seems to have overcome the "sound barrier" as yet – no one has pronounced clearly and aloud these communist-accursed words – private property. And while we are wasting time, the bureaupartocracy successfully forms its own communal market, where everything, the mummies close to and in the Kremlin Wall included, is for sale.

Well, the CPSU seems not to exist any longer. However, there do exist millions of Communists, and among them thousands and thousands of secretaries and Party apparatchiks of various kinds. There are multitudes of Party functionaries implanted by it in all cells and capillaries of our society. No normal blood circulation is possible under such conditions – only embolism and thrombosis. They are a gluttonous army of hangers-on and parasites unconquered even by Her Majesty Dictatorship of the Proletariat. So there is no chance left to us, with our sickly shoots of democracy increasingly devoured by the still omnipotent communist power of Soviets, by the hungry half-witted mob skillfully directed by the corps of Party commissars who have in time changed for "our armoured train." As long as this mob is having a ball, the real democracy "no pasarà!"

The logic of our social existence is very simple on the whole – far from every Communist is a self-seeker, but every self-seeker is a Communist of necessity, because otherwise he or she would not have succeeded in his or her place-hunting efforts. Membership in the CPSU obliges no one to be a carrier of communist ideals – it was quite enough to master an elementary course of political education and learn to use this knowledge efficiently to one's personal advantage. Because it is not even an ideology, but a lifestyle. This is why Messieurs les Camarades, Communist go-getters, have now unleashed themselves, taking advantage of the nationwide disorder. Some seek to become a people's deputy so that to have an apartment in the country's or a region's capital, a car without waiting for it in a line, and prestige; others organize vampirical ministerial concerns or rapacious cooperatives. The press abounds in criminal news about palaces which pass for bungaloes in possession of the former partisans of communal property and which are erected on a nationwide scale at the expense of the common national weal. It looks as if nobody is going to be concerned with these crooks...

Just look – our hands are trembling too...

You may believe whatever you like, but personally I am convinced that if, while it is not too late, we don't dissect these abscesses, if we don't dismantle all visible and, especially, invisible mechanisms of the party-bureaucratic union of the nouveaux riches of the Bolshevik underground, if we don't neutralize both the hotbeds and the individual carriers of the communist plague, it will cost us, "democrats," our heads, both literally and metaphorically. Thus Prince Hamlet's riddle "to be or not to be?" turns into a more practical question of "to beat or not to beat?" Yes, beat, yes, finish off the internal enemy in his own den. If, of course, we are seriously intending to live a human life; otherwise we will have to live the Soviet life, with all the consequences.

This Party communism has brought itself to its providential end, having supplied ample proof of, and logically carried out, its genuine intentions. Therefore, in this case not a different way of thinking would be prosecuted – so much for a way of thinking even of this sort! – but an evil intent which, should it manage to opiate the masses once again, will fling both the nation and the whole world into an abysmal darkness, this time with no hope of rescue. And all this philosophizing has nothing to do with political pluralism, it relates to the struggle against organized crime, and in this domain, I think, sentimentality and moralités are out of place.

They tried to scare us with a sort of jihad. And the frenzied men of letters and political zombies incited "the free Russian people" against us. We overlooked the ominous portents and grumbled a bit at the heralds – what else can be expected from the likes of them? And then they, the enemies, backed by adequate ideological support, besieged our parliament in order to isolate us there and start a total execution in the best of traditions of the classical communist Malleus Maleficarum. That would have been a nice edition of St. Bartholomew's night! They would have made pretty lampshades from our skins – reliable guys they are, our Communists!

And what about ourselves? But we are divine lambs. Miraculously having escaped being crushed, we began right away to demand mercy for those who had by sheer chance failed to become our executioners. Undemocratic! Prosecution for political reasons! Democracy will itself neutralize them in time and will force them to abide by universally recognized norms. However, this is not at all Christian humility, but a self-betrayal with suicidal consequences. Never will they let us create a democratic space, for the simple reason of its being their end, all the more so while they are more numerous than you or we are, and because of this all-forgiving mentality of ours.

The very nation and society are infected from outside with a venereal disease, called KGB

The recent dethroning of the Orenburg regional Party-and-Soviet mafia's leader seems to be a unique humane act lately committed by our present democratic authorities. But even here suspicions creep in that this exotic figure worthy of being exhibited at the People's Economic Achivements Exhibition who had been smart enough to support the "lawful" putsch in good time, was demoted in conformity with the usual formula of the stagnation times – "dismissed on the grounds of transfer to a new occupational position" – again to guide the masses, no doubt, since he has no other occupation. There are still too many Party-Cossak functionaries all over the country, with a lash at the ready.

We have been charmed with the comforting view of our putschists' trembling hands. But are our hands firm enough to reinforce the flanks of our Parliament?

So what is the situation like today? Messieurs les Democrates continue tearing to pieces our Fair Lady Democracy, unarmed and unprotected, trapped in endless rescue programmes, abused by Her own appointees, so far unable to cut off any conspicuous number of malicious hands reaching for Her throat, nor to solve any of the burning, glaring problems of trusting participants in democratic rallies.

And on the other side of the still decorative barricade is the partocracy disguised as sovietocracy assuming the invisible reins of government, together with underground regional and other committees which go on turning one sixth of the planet in the wrong direction. And there's the Central Committee-controlled press which, for foul-smelling money, has launched an attack for the

CPSU's evading spiritual and material weal, an attack more sophisticatedly frenzied than before the putsch. So what shall we do with all this? Let post-Bolshevism go on flourishing?

Probably. We have scarcely noticed that we have begun to cover ourselves with new, democratic myths instead of the rejected Party narratives, to create our own reformatory illusionism. The First Figure in the CPSU has at last freed himself from the illusions of its "reformability," thus sanctioning writing it off to the archives of history. But the Mother CPSU herself is, evidently, of a different opinion and doesn't intend to undergo departification. Further, we have convinced ourselves that the army rejected the putschists and took the side of the people. Is it really so? I beg to doubt it. To the best of my knowledge, the only evidence in favour of this conclusion is furnished by the seven tanks without munitions and a dozen of higher officers on the barricades near the Russian Parliament. As for the rest, i.e., the absolutely overwhelming part of the army, it may be praised only for its having crushed to death only three defenders of democracy. And if not for the disorder and the rioters' trembling hands. God knows... In the meantime, the army with all its explosive confusion is on the alert, as well as its gallant commanders (the self-same Makashovs, it seems).

Or take the KGB. In spite of all most brilliant Bakatins, this committee will remain not a mere "competent organ," but a phenomenon, an imperative salient feature of our "most socialist way of life." This phenomenon is an all-around shadowing and universal informing against all (not to mention one's enemies). The very nation and society are infected from outside with a venereal disease, called KGB. And this in the period when even medicine against the flue is more than scarce.

And, finally, our poor military industrial complex, which really, materially, though invisibly, owns the country's decisive industrial potential in which the nondescript lives of generations of Soviet people have been invested at the Party's will. But those who own the economy own the country. Meanwhile even democratic deputies are not admitted to the objects of the MIC's possession without a special permit. It's impossible even to take a peep – let alone secure control over them. So it is not for us to know what kind of ideas – conversion or conservative – they are cherishing, nor whether their consumer goods production is measured in consignments of handcuffs...

This is the sad landscape after the battle. Where to crawl? Of course, democracy spells tolerance for those who think differently, a message of non-violence. But we have no democracy as yet, only democrats. And, presumably, these democrats are called upon to remove, to stamp out everything antidemocratic that the territory we were doomed to be born in has rested and still rests upon, in order to demonstrate this democracy in all its glory. Only when the democratic legal space is deployed and fixed finally and irreversibly, will it be possible for everyone to fight for his place at the first microphone – for the Red, the White and the Green.

There can be no compromise: either we need a future or we want the past

But for the moment, while there is no confidence of this outcome, personally I am for a strong democratic hand, strong and turned not against us, but for us. I stand for the strong hand of democratic reformers, whose administrative corps, it seems, should have long ago been updated in favour of radicals and at the expense of those who tend to compromise. In favour of those who are able to lay a firm foundation of genuine state security for our democracy.

I hear voices protesting against making personal lists. Yes, yes, just personal lists, too, to prevent them from concealing themselves in their hide-outs. The enemy must be suppressed not only in power structures, but especially individually. Besides, unlike theirs, these lists do not imply handcuffing, only shortening of their hands. No power must be left to the Nomenklatura of the Proletariat, former or present, even in the communal service of the lowest level. Let them earn their livelihood by simple non-administrative labour and, provided they abide by law and do not interfere with others' life – let them live and let live. But they must be deprived of all power over people, material wealth, or events. I hope that this is within the competence of democrats, at least as a measure of personal security on the basis of reasonable egoism. It came to be known meanwhile that even the most odious ones, those who failed to retain their positions even before the putsch, still have at their disposal not only personal comfortable cars, but also the notorious special phones with direct connections, with whose help the entire 74-year communist putsch was accomplished, not to mention the three-day coup.

Postinfarctum

The hour of victory has already passed, since time does not work for anyone – it has only one inherent property, that of simply passing. It only remains for us to hope that it is not too late – "it's not the evening yet," as V. Vysotsky sang. But night is already falling.

You are free to think whatever you like, but personally I believed in the inevitability of a mean act on the part of those going off the scene. I was mistaken, fortunately, only with regard to the outcome of this action by our leading zombies. But even now I feel in my gut as a CPSU-educated person that they are not gone, or at least they are not far away. Nor have they lost all – on the contrary, they are tempered in the struggle against democrats. And we are feeding their hopes and ambitions.

Just look – our hands are trembling too... ■

Raising the stakes

At their congress Russian Germans consolidated to oppose the deal Russia and Germany are making behind their backs

The chances for the restoration of the rights of Russian Germans, including the right to a statehood on the Volga, have not improved at all after their congress which recently concluded its work in Moscow. The delegates to the congress did not have much faith in the words of Leonid Prokopyev, the Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Committee of Russia, who announced the Committee's concept of the restoration of German autonomy.

Prokopyev is convinced that the Law of the Russian Federation on Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples adopted by the Supreme Soviet of Russia on April 26 of this year is enough of a guarantee of the restoration of the German republic. The republic could be officially proclaimed after one year's time when hundreds of thousands of German resettlers have produced a favourable demographic situation in the Volga region. Before that, the main tasks are to specify the number of people willing to settle on the Volga, to convince the local people, and to work out an economic concept.

The congress condemned this concept as "leading nowhere" and stressed that law on rehabilitation could not be seen as a guarantee because "rehabilitation of Soviet Germans was not being carried out," as a result of which "Germans who want to preserve their ethnic identity are forced to emigrate."

The lack of trust in the Committee's concept was pre-programmed by the fact that that concept had been worked out without any participation of the largest organization of Soviet Germans, the society Revival, whose members dominated at the congress. Besides, the opinion of the congress was that Prokopyev turned the whole problem upside down: there will be no massive German resettlement on the Volga until a German republic is founded there and the republic's name is included in the Constitution of the Russian Federation.

A compromise could have been reached, had Boris Yeltsin attended the congress and declared his stance on the matter. The President of Russia was expected by the delegates for two days. When he was invited to attend the congress in summer, Boris Yeltsin said that death alone could prevent him from attending it. However, at the end of the second day the presidential chancellery informed the congress that Yeltsin was too busy.

Boris Yeltsin preferred to discuss the German question with the Chairman of the Ethnic Affairs Committee, Leonid Prokopyev, and the parliamentary secretary of the German Interior Ministry, Horst Waffenschmidt. As a result, the stance of the President of Russia was conveyed to the delegates by the German statesman: Yeltsin supported the restoration of the German republic.

These people often cannot say why they are so opposed to Germans

Photo by the author

The governments of Russia and Germany have been negotiating the future of two-million people living in the USSR for a long time already. However, the Germans themselves are being left out in the cold. This fact was regarded by the delegates of the congress as a violation of at least three international documents: the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Helsinki Final Act...

Unfortunately, the Soviet Germans have no representative body that could negotiate with both governments on their behalf. There are individual leaders and individual organizations. Until recently, the Revival was avoided by both the Russian and German governments because of its radical demand for an immediate restoration of the republic. The Germans themselves were unable to agree at times. Now that Soviet Germans, even the ones adhering to different viewpoints, have seen a real threat to "the national-liberation movement" (as the Revival chairman Heinrich Grout put it), they have decided to unite in the Council for German Rehabilitation elected by the congress.

Taking into account the acuteness of the situation in the country and the continuing protests on the Volga (where a restive population threatens to retaliate to the restoration of the German republic by blowing up bridges and blocking motorways, and deputies of the Saratov Regional Soviet even urge the Russian parliament to suspend some provisions of the Law on Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples) the leaders of Russia want to settle the conflict peacefully, which, in effect, delays the final solution of the German question.

This situation can hardly satisfy Bonn, weary of the endless influx of German immigrants from the East (150,000 Soviet Germans emigrated in 1990 alone). German politicians are energetically lobbying in Moscow for speedier restoration of the German republic which might reduce the flow of emigrants. Germany has promised subsidies to the new republic. The prospect of getting additional millions of Deutsche Marks, even though in exchange for a German autonomy, seems tempting for the leadership of Russia. Yeltsin has agreed to sign the bilateral agreement on cooperation in the restoration of the German republic. The signing is planned for Yeltsin's visit to Bonn this November.

Soviet Germans fear, however, that the bargaining over credits and investments may go on for too long and in the meantime the Russian parliament will adopt the new constitution containing no mention of the German republic. If these fears become a reality, there will be no hope for Germans in this country.

Remarkably, the delegates of the congress were much more enthusiastic when they discussed immigration than when they debated the concept of the German republic. Said the resolution of the congress: if the republic is not declared until January 1992 the Council for German Rehabilitation elected at the congress will start organizing a massive emigration.

Konstantin Isakov

On August 31 the Riga-based unit of the OMON special-purpose police left the Latvian capital. A crowd gathered. Covering their withdrawal, OMON unit threw several smoke pots. Through puffs of smoke one could see an inscription on an armoured carrier, saying "We shall return"

"We shall return," special-purpose police said when leaving Latvia's capital

The failure of the Moscow coup has put an end to the short record of the Riga-based special-purpose police (OMON). But recollections of the hated OMON will hang over the Russian community in Latvia for a long time

Leonid Mlechin

The Riga-based special-purpose police were redeployed to Tyumen. Nevertheless, the Latvian Prosecutor's Office continues the investigation. One of the OMON officers has already been arrested. The OMON unit is being accused of murder, robbery, arson and participation in an anti-government coup.

Police within police

The OMON was set up in 1988 by Vadim Bakatin, then Minister of the Interior. He realized that the poor and corrupt police was not prepared to combat major crime. OMON troops were to become islands of professionalism. The OMON was also to be charged with another task, namely, to break up

unauthorized demonstrations and crush mass riots. All this made for its special status of police within police.

In Riga, the OMON recruited largely young and sturdy policemen, mainly from the patrol and point-duty service, those who usually relied on their muscles and clashed with criminals. Several veterans of the Afghan war also joined the unit. Among them was Captain Czeslaw Mlynnik, the future commander of the unit. The OMON was for them a desired continuation of their former life. They again had weapons in their hands. True, it was now necessary to find an enemy.

The future of the unit was determined during the first year of its existence, when it was still out of politics and favourably appraised in the media. Having acquired almost full independence, the OMON unit did not know problems usual for the police and could act on its own. For instance, on its own initiative the unit cracked down inderground spirits distillers. The selling of home-made alcoholic drinks spread widely after the adoption of the prohibition law.

OMON troopers detained one dealer after another, but the number of people engaged in the profitable business did not diminish. That being so, they began to take the money and spirits away from dealers using their fists, clubs and gunbutts. Dealers did not dare to complain. OMON troopers concluded that they could do the job the "clumsy" prosecutors and "very mild" judges failed to do.

Many people liked the firm and resolute actions taken by the OMON unit during the first year of its activity. The dexterous robust fellows, who surpassed their colleagues in the police, inspired confidence in the citizens of Riga. The minor sins of these nice boys could simply be forgiven.

Senior lieutenant Kuzmin wounded two people in a drunk scuffle at a restaurant. Was he punished? No, they sent him with an assault group to attack the Press House in Riga. *Der Spiegel* mentioned him in an article entitled "Rambo-like killers"

In the meantime the Soviet news agency TASS continued to send biassed reports from Riga with photographs showing OMON unit with smiling children

Mandate for the KGB

The OMON was formed at the time when Latvia was a Soviet Socialist Republic. But in May 1990 it ceased to exist as a socialist republic, and this largely explains the subsequent events.

Instead of recognizing the independence of Latvia as well as Lithuania and Estonia, Moscow provoked a fierce and violent political struggle in the republic. The Soviet establishment was dominated by officials who banished any thought of letting the Baltic republics go their own way. President Gorbachev was heaped up with intelligence "irrefutably" showing that all the developments in the Baltic republics were masterminded by CIA agents. The national press was fed with "trustworthy information" about the Baltic militants and the huge quantity of weapons allegedly kept by them. It was the work of the KGB with its rich experience of misinformation.

The Army and the KGB received the desired mandate for "establishing order". A dangerous situation of dual power arose in Latvia after it proclaimed its independence. On the one hand, the republic had a constitutionally elected parliament and a government formed by it. On the other hand, an anti-government coalition was formed of the Communist Party, new political organizations like the Intermovement, and the military.

The government and the paliament relied on the law and the support of the Letts. The anti-government had the backing of the Army, the KGB, law-enforcement bodies, and the resources controlled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The anti-government coalition, led by Alfreds Rubiks, the new First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party (on the CPSU platform), declared that it would protect the rights and freedoms of the non-Letts. It was a clever move and a good cover.

Far from all Russians were against the new government. The opposition consisted of elderly people who thought that the Letts should be grateful to Moscow for having been joined to the Soviet Union in 1940, and certainly of those who defended their privileged status in Latvia, who had nothing to do in an independent republic.

Almost all non-Letts were confused. Hearing contradictory and sometimes frightening statements by Popular Front leaders, members of parliament and ministers, they felt the dangerous uncertainty of their situation.

Riga and Moscow should equally share the guilt for alienation between Letts and non-Letts. Moscow incited Russians against the lawfully elected government and the independence of the republic. Riga did nothing to help the non-indigenous population adapt to the new life. This situation opened good opportunities before future putschists in the Army and the KGB for carrying out their strategy of tension.

A tangible blow at the OMON

The well known TV reporter Alexander Nevzorov once described the OMON black berets as "the best people who wish only good". He did so because the Riga-based OMON unit had joined the ranks of "our people".

"They are honest towards themselves and others," Nevzorov said pathetically. "They are fighting for the Motherland. The OMON people stand out for a normal, adequate perception of reality." No one recalled that originally the OMON took the position on the other side of the barricades.

On May 15, 1990 the Riga OMON unit became a hero of the Lettish people. On that day the Soviet Union was defenceless from the north-west. The Baltic Military District made the first attempt to overthrow the lawfully elected government. Staff officers and cadets of military schools dressed in civilian clothes tried to storm the Latvian parliament building. I was near the parliament on that day and saw a crowd of servicemen who filled the central part of the city. The valiant officers of the Soviet Army despised their opponents so much that they decided to put them down without arms. I think they will not repeat such a mistake again.

When high-ranking officers tried to force their way into the parliament building the authorities called the OMON unit. The black berets used their clubs against colonels and majors. The attack was repulsed. Staff officers moved back to their headquarters to draw up plans for new attacks in Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn. The black berets regarded themselves as heroes and expected a deserved reward. But a reward did not follow.

The government formed by Popular Front deputies replaced Interior Minister Bruno Steinbriks whom the Latvian police backed almost unanimously, will Aloizs Vaznis, who was fiercely opposed, especially by his subordinates in Riga. Accordingly, Vaznis looked upon the Riga police as the citadel of the opposition.

Today Letts constitute less than half the population of Riga. There are even less Letts, roughly a fifth, in the Riga police. The point is that former servicemen were usually recruited into this non-prestigious service by promises of flats in one of the most alluring cities of the country. The proclamation of independence by Latvia proved an unpleasant surprise for guardians of public order. The short time of residence in Riga did not make them eligible for Latvian citizenship. They did not speak Lettish and the prospect of career advancement immediately became grim.

The new Interior Minister Aloizs Vaznis did not go to the OMON unit, where he was expected. Instead, he dealt the black berets a telling blow. The previous minister allowed them to establish a security cooperative service named Viking for the protection of restaurants, cooperatives and individuals who could afford to pay for the service. To use the words of TV reporter Nevzorov, the Riga black berets had "a normal, adequate perception of reality." They understood right away that their salary was not enough to live on and that it was much more pleasant to protect for money those whom they ought to detain in the pursuit of their duty. Interior Minister Vaznis forbade his subordinates to work for cooperatives and decided to carry out the departification of the Interior Ministry.

Lt.-Colonel Edgars Limars refused to obey the new minister and declared through the newpaper *Sovetskaya Latvia* (Soviet Latvia) that he would carry out only those orders which did not conflict with the Constitution of the USSR and the Constitution of Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic. The government and the OMON unit became enemies.

Bakatin regrets

Interior Minister Vaznis did not want to keep the OMON unit. Alfreds Rubiks, First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, wanted to acquire it. He was the first VIP to visit the base of the OMON unit in the special commandant's office, where criminals were held before. Rubiks could talk with people. He promised to take care of the black berets. Gorbachev did not want the Army to interfere in the internal political strife. Rubiks needed an armed unit of the Communist Party. The Lithuanian branch of the CPSU was unable to raise such a unit, and in January 1991 the putschists had to bring Army units into action. In Latvia the putschists had the OMON unit at their disposal.

When the Latvian parliament appointed a new prosecutor of the republic the black berets placed guards in front of the Prosecutor's Office building and did not let him in. Two Prosecutor's Offices – of the Latvian republic and the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic – appeared in Riga. Engaged in the struggle against each other, they did not disturb criminals.

Interior Minister Vaznis demanded that the revolted OMON unit should not be supplied with ammunition and fuel and sent a letter to Moscow urging it to disband the unit. Early in October 1990 the Riga OMON unit was attached to the 42nd division of the Interior Ministry troops. It can be assumed that Vadim Bakatin, the Minister of the Interior, was asked to "take the growth of separatist sentiments in the Baltic republics into account and keep there boys loyal to the Soviet government." Later one Bakatin would regret that he preserved the OMON unit.

Starting last autumn the Riga OMON unit became subordinate to Alfreds Rubiks, First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party, and General Fyodor Kuzmin, commander of the Baltic Military District.

On November 7 Rubiks ordered that the black berets gather near the Central Committee Building with the aim of defending it and the demonstrators against hostile attacks. If necessary, they were allowed to use arms. Several days later the help of the black berets was needed in Jurmala. The court of arbitration had passed a ruling to evict the Jurmala City Committee of the Communist Party from the City Hall Building. The lawyers concluded that the Communists had moved into that building unlawfully and had never paid rent. But when the city authorities tried to fulfil the court ruling Fyodor Kuzmin sent marines and Alfreds Rubiks sent black berets. The First Secretary of the Jurmala Party Committee watched with pleasure as the black berets clubbed Jurmala policemen. Two Jurmala policemen were hospitalized.

Some black berets were not inspired by the prospect of serving in an armed unit of the Communist Party. Lt.-Colonel Lymars, the first commander of the OMON unit, and his deputy Janis Veseris left the unit. They understood that the conflict with the authorities had gone too far. New people, lured by the prospect of taking part in a "real cause," joined the black berets. Czieslaw Mlynnik, a veteran of the Afghan war, became commander and Major Andrei Chetsky, former counterintelligence officer, "commissar" of the OMON unit.

General Shatalin conducts the Party's will

The Latvian government decided to turn the publishing house of the Communist Party's Central Committee, the only major one in the republic, into a joint-stock company. The Party was expected to hold about a third of the shares. Rubiks did not agree with this decision. The moves he had taken finally led to the complete disappearance of the Latvian Communist Party and Rubiks himself landed in an isolation cell...

Interior Minister Aloizs Vaznis soon had a telephone call from General Kuzmin, commander of the Baltic Military District. "To the best of my knowledge," he said, "a group of nationalists is preparing to attack the Press House. Perhaps we should send Army units to defend it."

Vaznis replied he had no information about the planned attack and asked Kuzmin to disclose the sources of such information in order to assess their reliability. The commander of the military district gave him no information. The Press House, in which the printing works, the publishing house and the editorial offices of nearly all republican newspapers and magazines are homed, was seized – not by bourgeois nationalists, however, but by OMON black berets.

"The decision to introduce a new regime of control in the Press House was made by the Party's Central Committee with the aim of defending its property rights," Rubiks explained. General Shatalin, commander of the Interior Ministry troops, issued an order to carry the Party's will into effect. (After the August putsch Shatalin was removed from his post, though his colleagues lamented the decision, for they could not understand why such a good officer was dismissed from his position).

In the Interior Ministry the less compliant Bakatin was replaced by Boris Pugo. "Reliable" people were placed in the key posts.

In the archives of the Party's Central Committee, the KGB, and the Defence Ministry one can probably find now plans for the overthrow of the Latvian government. The three departments failed to get

In January Riga looked like a frontline city. Letts will remember these days for a long time

Gorbachev's approval for declaring a state of emergency in the Baltic republics and therefore tried to stampede their governments into violence. They only needed a pretext for dissolving the parliaments and turning power over to the military.

"We are professional mercenaries"

The OMON unit played the master in Riga for several days in January.

On the night of January 15 the black berets seized the Riga branch of the Minsk police school. On January 20 Major Chetsky put his unit on alert and told his subordinates that "militants" had raped the wife of one of the black berets. The unit moved to the city in order to capture the "ringleaders of the gang".

For some reason the black berets searched for "ringleaders" in the Latvian Interior Ministry. Its building was taken by storm. Four persons – two policemen, a cameraman of the studio, and a pedestrian – were killed in the attack.

The bloodshed in January led to irreversible changes in the souls of the black berets. They began to enjoy their occupation. They relished this way of life. It was "real work" for them. No one controlled them. They played the master in the city and thought they could do anything they liked.

They probably regarded themselves as Robin Hoods, soldiers of fortune, superpolicemen. They were praised by Rubiks and Kuzmin and, later, by TV reporter Nevzorov, who played a considerable part in the destiny of the Riga black berets.

However, the criminal flavour in the superpolicemen actions became stronger and stronger. "We shall not leave the place and shall not abandon the people, because carnage will follow," Major Andrei Chetsky tried to ram the message home to journalists. Catching a moment, one journalist asked Chetsky where they obtained food in such a situation. "Food products?" the major asked. "Well, we take them."

Senior Lieutenant Alexander Kuzmin displayed particular zeal during the seizure of the Press House. He had some grounds to hate journalists. The local newpaper *Sovetskaya Molodezh* (Soviet Youth) once described vividly how black berets caroused in the Sonata restaurant. During a scuffle Kuzmin shot one of his opponents in the leg and another in the belly. Was he punished? The senior lieutenant was sent to seize the Press House.

However, the black berets no longer felt at ease in the city. All of sudden they felt the hatred of the whole people. They constantly feared an attack. An alarm was raised at the OMON unit base two or three times during a night. Black berets built pillboxes and barricades of sand sacks.

Those who did not want to take part in outrages left the unit. For instance, Captain Umbrashko refused to carry out the order for an attack on the TV centre and left the OMON unit. "I knew there was a man who had been ordered to kill me," the captain told journalists later. "This man was shown to me afterwards." The captain had good reason for fear. Shortly before the attack on the TV centre Sergei Krotov was killed. A former officer of the unit, he led the Viking cooperative. Krotov knew how much money each member of the OMON unit made...

A custom house set on fire at night

The Interior Ministry, the KGB and the Army openly scoffed at the Balts. Boris Pugo declared that his ministry was taking the OMON unit under special control and appointed Colonel Nikolai Goncharenko as his special representative in Riga. The Moscow critics of the Interior Ministry were satisfied, for they did not know Goncharenko...

Lieutenant-Colonel Nikolai Goncharenko was deputy head of the Internal Affairs Department in Riga. He refused to recognize the declaration of independence of Latvia and its new Minister of the Interior. He was relieved of his post and went to Moscow where he easily found likeminded people. Goncharenko was promoted to the rank of colonel and returned to Riga as a special representative of the Minister. It was even more proof for the black berets that Moscow supported them.

On the night of May 22 black berets drove up on two jeeps to the custom house on the border between Latvia and Lithuania. They beat the unarmed customs officials and set their booth on fire. Twenty black berets went to another post. For TV reporter Nevzorov, who videotaped an attack on one more custom house, the spectacle was staged already by 30 black berets. On May 23, 1991 the Latvian and Soviet delegations were to begin negotiations. The Moscow delegation did not appear while the OMON unit replied in its own way to Riga's proposal to recognize the independence of the republic.

The OMON black berets spent the last weeks before the August putsch in the vague expectation of changes for the better. On August 22 all their hopes were dashed to the ground. A week later they ran away from Latvia. Judging by initial reports from Tyumen, little has changed in their life. They now call to order not Letts, but Russians. The OMON black berets are also victims in a way. Rubiks, Kuzmin, Pugo, Nevzorov and others bore a part in their destiny.

The prediction of Major Chetsky did not come true. Carnage did not follow and it will not begin. However, the Russians living in Latvia feel neglected and lonely. The OMON was not a protection for them, though the unit had its admirers. They brought food, coffee and money to Vecmilgravis, a fringe district of Greater Riga to which the OMON unit redeployed its base. Czeslaw Mlynnik threw money into the drawer of his desk without counting it.

The Rubiks-led party, the Baltic Military District, the KGB and the OMON – in short, everyone who promised the non-Letts to defend them, did grave harm to the non-Letts by setting one community against the other and destroying trust between them. The Russian community had one and a half or two years to prepare for life in independent Latvia. This time has been wasted.

The newspaper *Neatkariga Cina* wrote that the OMON black berets were reckoned as the wicked spirit. Old women claim that the devil has dragged them off to the inferno as the spirits of evil while others think that the black berets wander about the streets and frighten children, and that on dark autumn nights the souls of their victims come to the deserted OMON unit base and search for the butchers who escaped punishment.

Photos by TASS, from the newspaper Sovetskaya Molodezh (Latvia), and Der Spiegel (Germany)

EXCLUSIVE FOR NEW TIMES

Henry Kissinger:

The USSR will become a great power

The well-known political figure, **Henry Kissinger,** US, spoke at the international congress which was organized by young Mexican businessmen and took place in Mexico. Giving his point of view on the current international situation, the former US Secretary of State talked much about the situation in the USSR. After having spoken to the businessmen, Kissinger was hurrying to meet with the Mexican president. For right after that he would board a plane and fly back to America. Therefore he agreed to give an interview to *New Times* on the run, as they say. My questions touched on what he had said about the Soviet Union in his speech. What did Dr. Kissinger think about the situation in the Soviet Union?

Henry Kissinger. Many in the US interpret the events in the Soviet Union as if it were a country with a monolithic system of government which has firmly set democracy as its goal. I think that the situation is actually much more complex. Two revolutions are occurring simultaneously in the Soviet Union. One is against the communist system, that is against its 74 year history. The other is against the imperialism which reigned for several centuries in Russian history. The figures in these revolutions are not the same. Many Russian leaders coming out against communism, at the same time defend the empire. They don't want the democratization of the republics, for that would mean the end of the Union.

Secondly, not all anti-communists are democrats. Actually, many of them headed the communist party organizations just 2–3 years ago. This is especially true of the majority of leaders in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Thus there are several serious problems before the Soviet Union: the impending economic disaster and the crisis of the political system and the government. The problem with the economy is more or less clear. It's the inevitable result of planning Stalin style with all commercial ties being carried out between ministries and departments of the basis of political decisions. And as you know, it's very difficult to create a market economy in a country where there are no markets and no entrepreneurs. That's one of the reasons that the initial plans of Gorbachev in this area turned out to be a total failure. Since 1985 the state budget deficit grew from 4 to 25% of the GPN.

Moreover, the political set-ups in the country were absent which could change the situation. Gorbachev set about strengthening the Communist Party, thinking that this was perhaps the solution to the problem. He tried to find a balance between the conservatives and reformers. You know how that turned out.

Meanwhile, the fight between the Centre and the republican governments continues. That is something the rest of the world must not interfere in.

Nevertheless, I think what Gorbachev achieved is phenomenal. I have the greatest respect for this man. However, that doesn't change the fact that many revolutionaries become victims of the forces they fight against.

New Times For many years you dealt with the Soviet Union as an equal adversary. Do you see our country as stronger or weaker than the country you knew then?

H.K. Militarily it is weaker, but politically it is stronger. But I think that this country will still become a great power. Russia alone is a huge country and it has one of the largest populations in the world.

N.T. What do you think of the economic and political reforms being carried out in the Soviet Union now?

H.K. I think politically the USSR is moving in the right direction. As for the economy, I don't think much can be done until the political problems are resolved.

N.T. What set-up of the central and republican governments should be there, in your opinion?

H.K. That is something the Soviet people themselves will have to decide... I think a confederation would be the best for all. By the way, there has been no ideal confederation so far.

N.T. Does the Soviet Union still represent a threat to the USA?

H.K. No.

Yuri Kudimov,
our own correspondent

MEXICO

■

Refuseniks Revisited

The Soviet Union has restored diplomatic relations with Israel. However, the future of Soviet-Israeli relations is not as bright as it might seem

1948: Golda Meir, the first Israeli Ambassador in Moscow

1991: Boris Pankin and David Levi restored diplomatic relations in Jerusalem

The year of 1991 – the Year of the Middle East – that started with bloodshed is drawing to a close with a new hope peace. It is difficult to predict what the Madrid peace conference will produce, but on October 30 it will convene in a much more favourable atmosphere than the 1973 conference. Moreover, the Madrid conference has been much better prepared.

The restoration of full diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel has become a serious positive contribution to the preparatory work for the peace conference carried out by the two superpowers for the sake of peace in the Middle East. However, in this connection people living in the Soviet Union are more interested in the purely material advantages that diplomatic relations with Israel can produce than in the international significance of the event.

The development of Soviet-Israeli trade is experiencing serious difficulties despite mutual interest. The insolvency of the Soviet side and the nonconvertible ruble are the main obstacles. Soviet businessmen have nothing to offer in exchange for Israeli-made goods. In 1990 Israeli exports to the Soviet Union were worth a modest six million dollars.

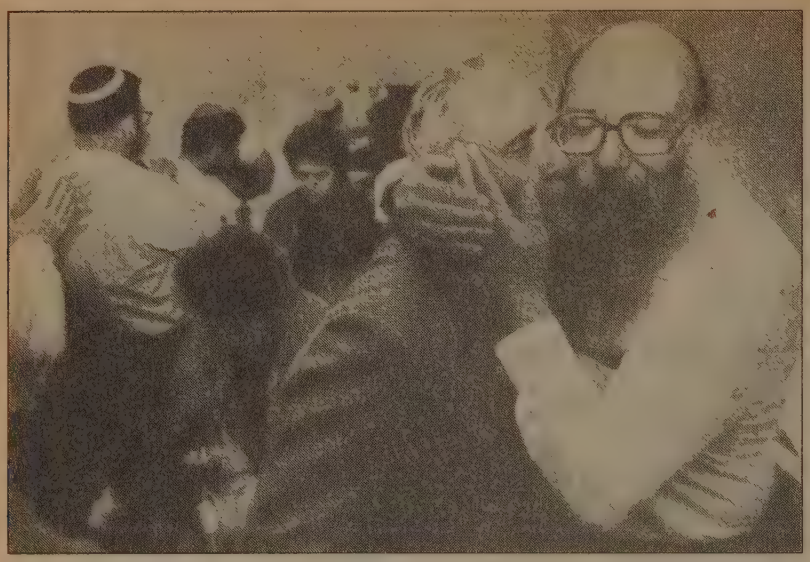
The experience of joint ventures set up by Soviet and Israeli partners has not been very inspiring so far. Various bureaucratic complications make doing business difficult in the Soviet Union, but this is not the main thing. Many Soviet businessmen who are prepared to go to any lengths for personal enrichment have already earned a bad reputation in Israel.

Tens of thousands of our former compatriots cannot be indifferent to what Soviet-Israeli relations will look like. Soviet emigrants who have not lost touch with their former home can represent Israeli business interests in Moscow and start establishing mutually profitable economic relations with the USSR. Their command of the language and the knowledge of the specific conditions for business in the Soviet Union will help them seriously advance the development of business relations.

On the other hand, not all emigrants from the Soviet Union are advocates of extensive relations between Israel and the USSR. Most emigrants left the Soviet Union fleeing the unbearable conditions there. Anti-Semitism, which used to be an organic element of Soviet domestic policy, was the main reason why hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews left their homes and headed for Israel. In any Soviet republic Jews were limited in the choice of jobs, education, and career opportunities, to say nothing of religious freedom, opportunities to study their language, history and culture. Jews had to forgo their national identity to enter Soviet social life. Before they could leave for Israel, emigrants had to spend a lot of time living in virtual isolation, and many of them were ostracized by other people. All this could not have failed to breed a certain distaste for things Soviet.

Restoration of contacts with Israel through the mediatory offices of former Soviet citizens will only be possible as a result of the cardinal changes going on in Soviet republics, particularly Russia, if Russia – the native country of many prominent Israeli public figures and statesmen, a country that has produced a powerful cultural influence on the development of Israeli society – makes relations with Israel a priority of its Middle East policy... As for the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union, they are likely to pay more attention to developing contacts with the Arab world.

Due to a very special geographical position and history, Israelis have an acute sense of national awareness. That is why they are very sensitive about measures being taken in Russia to practically safeguard the declared equality of all nationalities and confessions. Israeli society can easily lose faith in the irreversibility of the democratic process in Russia, if even a hint of disrespect or contempt is



Meeting Soviet emigrants in Israel: out of danger of pogroms and into assimilation troubles
Photo from the magazine US News and World Report (USA)

shown to the peoples which do not make up the bulk of the population of Russia.

Political instability in Russia accompanied by the already organized anti-Semitism (Pamyat and other such groups) and the deepening economic crisis force many Jews to emigrate from Russia and, according to many Israeli observers, this fact confirms the correctness of the Zionist policy aimed at speedier repatriation of all Soviet Jews to Israel, no matter what the cost. People in Israel are convinced that Jews will inevitably be rejected by Soviet society. It is interesting to see what the Israeli press wrote after the funerals of the three victims of the August putsch in Moscow.

The Israeli Russian-languge newspaper *Nasha Strana* wrote that a tallith covering one of the coffins, the Jewish prayer of Kaddish sung by a rabbi, the posthumous decoration of Ilya Krichevsky with the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union, and Boris Yeltsin's emphatic mention of Krichevsky's nationality at the mourning ceremony looked like an inspiring sign that a new era had begun in Russia after six decades of rigid anti-Semitic policies pursued by the Soviet state and the Communist Party. However, according to the author of the article in *Nasha Strana*, this same event was also a demonstration of open disrespect for the Jewish tradition: the funerals took place on a Saturday in violation of all dogmas of Judaism. The presence at the funeral of representatives of the xenophobic Pamyat society clad in the fatigues of the tsarist army could be compared, according to the author, to "the presence of SS-uniformed neo-Nazis at the ceremony for remembering the victims of the Holocaust."

Many representatives of the Israeli public believe that Jews will always continue to be an alien element in Soviet society and that the situation will not improve even after the radical changes in the position of the Jewish community in the USSR. Jews may be once again made scapegoats in the political battles in Russia. Israeli observers also believe that even if democracy wins in Russia and most Jews show themselves to be active supporters of democracy, the fate of Soviet Jewry will hardly be enviable. This view is confirmed by the examples of democratic Poland und Hungary where anti-Semitism is as prevalent as ever, despite the tiny segment of Jews in the overall population of those countries.

The restoration of diplomatic relations with Israel is a reasonable, just and useful measure. The Soviet establishment had to forego its old prejudice to take this measure. Logically, the Soviet leadership now should take resolute measures inside the country to change society's attitude towards Jews who make up an organic element of the population of Russia.

Yelena Melkumyan
Cand.Sc.(History)

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Balance after victory?

The Union of Democratic Forces has won the election, but the main battles are still ahead of it

Election passions have not yet calmed down, but it is already clear that the political evolution of Bulgaria will go through new dramatic turns. Most probably, 110 out of the Bulgarian parliament's 240 seats will go to the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), 106 to the Bulgarian Socialist (former Communist) Party and 24 to the Movement for Rights and Freedoms representing Moslem minority. Representatives of 40 other parties and coalitions, who took part in the elections, have not won the necessary number of votes and cannot be allowed to sit in parliament.

The Blues (blue is the colour of the UDF) finally have an opportunity to form a government. However, the Union's four-seat preponderance is precarious and fragile: as practice has shown, up to ten percent of members of parliament may be absent at sittings. It is easy to foresee a chronic stalemate – or a successful performance in the event that the Union cooperates with the BSP faction. The tie-breaking vote may often belong to the smallest faction – the Movement for Rights and Freedoms – a fact that the Bulgarian nation may be bitter about... It is also necessary to remember that a two-thirds majority is needed to change the current Constitution, which used to be the object of the UDF attacks.

The BSP which has lost power and become the main opposition force, is likely to start demanding the government's resignation after the UDF-formed cabinet makes its first mistakes. In the event of a government crisis the Bulgarian Constitution allows the opposition to insist on the formation of its own government.

One more reason for pessimism is the complicated economic situation in the country.

Although there is no shortage of food, people in Bulgaria are uneasy about the approaching winter, with the lack of power resources, the budget deficit, galloping inflation and the resulting growth of wages and salaries not backed with any GNP increase, and new price hikes. Unemployment has reached the dangerous level of 350,000 per four million employed. One of the main reasons for the soaring unemployment is the curtailment of industrial production, which is, in its turn, determined by the shortage of raw materials, 70 percent of which used to be supplied by the Soviet Union.

In the last decade of October Moscow was visited by Dr Zhelyu Zhelev, the current (and the next?) President of Bulgaria

TASS photo

Observers note that Bulgaria will be in for a hard time this winter without greater financial support from the West. However, no such support is likely to be forthcoming until the end of this year.

The way out of the economic impasse may be in reasonable encouragement of production which will be possible if and after the parliament adopts a number of laws. Will the Union be able to conduct its policies in these conditions and will the BSP agree to the methods of overcoming the crisis? Much in the life of Bulgarians will depend on the cooperation of the two major political forces, on whether they will be able to reject ambitions and demonstrate a reasonable approach to economic matters. To take the first concrete steps to economic recovery Bulgaria will have to immediately establish commercial cooperation with former socialist countries and start using their markets.

One more way to overcome the crisis is to privatize state property as soon as possible. So far there has been no progress towards privatization because the sides cannot agree which privatization scheme should be given preference. The first plan is based on the equal opportunities principle where everybody receives investment certificates, as was the case in Czecho-Slovakia. The other scheme allows those with money and experience to buy enterprises from the state. In this case, the commercial structures set up by the former Communist Party may find themselves in a privileged position.

Everybody understands the necessity of reforming the structure of industrial enterprises and to work out a mechanism for enterprises' restructuring. The situation has not changed at all. Despite hundreds of thousands of people out of work, and galloping inflation, not a single enterprise has so far declared itself bankrupt, or changed the forms of its functioning.

... Three months later Bulgaria will see another political spectacle – presidential elections. Although presidential powers are limited in a parliamentary republic like Bulgaria, the President can seriously influence the country's political life. For instance, the President has the right to veto parliamentary decisions. In addition, in the current complicated political situation the President is the symbol of the victorious party or movement, which is very important.

The current President Dr Zhelyu Zhelev is seen as the likeliest candidate. One of the UDF leaders, Dr Zhelyu Zhelev enjoys the respect of both major political forces. He has earned the authority of a wise politician and a decent man. During the August putsch in Moscow Dr Zhelev became the first East European leader to condemn the plotters and express support for Boris Yeltsin. Unlike him, the leaders of the BSP assumed an ambiguous position during the putsch.

Boris Balkarei,
our own correspondent

SOFIA

Boris Balkarei, our new correspondent in Sofia. Born in 1948 in Odessa. Graduated from a Polytechnical institute and worked as an engineer. Joined the newspaper *Chernomorsky Mayak*, graduated from the Department of Journalism at Moscow University and then worked for *Sovietskaya Rossiya*. Joined *New Times* in 1987.

Next war will begin in Asia

The Soviet Union is plunging into anarchy. China is saving communism. Mongolia hesitates with reforms. The Vietnamese are building capitalism of their own. And North Korea holds on tight

The attention of the citizens of the still or already former USSR is wholly riveted on internal affairs. Foreign countries interest them almost exclusively from the point of view of receiving aid. And they look most longingly towards the US and Western Europe. Other regions of the planet, including immense Asia, have fallen out of their field of vision. Now only from time to time and in passing do they remember in the USSR about the Far Eastern donor South Korea, and without the proper respect. "The South Korean journalists want to interview me!" a Russian political leader said in surprise recently. "Of all the gall! As if I had nothing better to do!" They were just about to say the same about the potential "milking cow" Japan, but stopped short. The Japanese covet the isalnds! The Chinese are increasingly becoming just an example of the unacceptable use of tanks to put down their own people. Furthermore, someone started the rumour that a big number of vexed conspirators of the CPSU and KGB ran to their Chinese comrades. And that is all we get from the Far East.

The exporters of communism in knock-out

Soviet and Russian policy in the Asian-Pacific region (APR), until quite recently energetic and brightly enthusiastic, has softened and paled under the weight of internal adversity. There's no expecting clarity and coordination of action in the foreseeable future from Moscow, but the basic conduct of the USSR in regard to the East can be predicted. First of all, the end has come for the export of communism in all its variety of manifestations (from naked military aggression to the handing out of medals to fanatics entrenched in tropical jungles). Secondly, in time the Kremlin will have to refrain from great power fantasies. It doesn't have the might. Thirdly, the Soviet Union is trying as fast as possible to rid itself of its former "friends" in Asia. Neither ideology nor claims to the leading role in the region, nor concern about the state's security, nor economic interests make it necessary for Gorbachev to maintain Vietnam, North Korea, Mongolia, or Laos on full board and lodging anymore. Fourthly, the USSR will continue to disarm in the APR and it can't be excluded that it qill go ahead with new one-sided measures (forget aircraft carriers when it's not just a matter of no butter, but no bread). Fifthly, Moscow will go to great lenghts to distance itself from all remaining hot spots in Asia and try not to get entangled in another Afghanistan or Cambodia. The Soviet leaders prefer to live in peace (even an unsatisfactony one) with all countries off the APR, and especially with the rich and strong neighbours. And finally, the former power will go around Asia with an open bag. It is most likely America and Europe will not give all the aid necessary and attention to the tight Asian purse will double.

Such a Soviet policy towards the East might seem very attractive for former (and remaining) opponents. Instead of the aggressive, ambitious, armed to the teeth, ideologically inpenetrable monster, they will be dealing with a softened, weak, undecisive, struggling client begging for mercy. But it's probably too early to count one's chickens. It's possible the future developments in the USSR hold new, not very pleasant surprises for everyone, including it's Asian neighbours. A civil war like in Yugoslavia (interethnic fighting) and at the same time the Romanian (class struggle) scenario can not be ruled out. The chaos and destruction would inevitably splash outside its borders. It would singe Mongolia and also the border regions of China with a population identical to that of Soviet Central Asia. It would sow fear, mistrust, tension, and generate another splash of the arms race and an economic crisis in the whole Asian-Pacific basin. A dictatorial regime will for certain rise on the ruins of a civil war. It will be based on pure force and it's ideology will be that of a Great Russian power.

There could also be the scenario whereby the Union, through a civil war or without it, breaks down into principalities with different political-ideological orientation and, mainly, with mutually exclusive interests. Nasty rivalry starts betrween them and they solicit the support of their neighbours. As a result the balance of forces formed over the years could be upset and the situation become ungovernable. China, for instance, could enter into an alliance with the Soviet Asian republics (Uzbekistan, Kirghizia), which are close to the Middle Kingdom not only geographically and racially, but ideolocally as well. The other ominous perspectivve is the union of that very same Central Asia with their Muslim brothers both in China and the main centres of pan-Islamism.

The great ideological wall

In Beijing they were terribly frightened by the anti-communist takeover in Moscow and are feverishly looking for ways to raise a great ideological wall in the nothern outposts of the country. The number one task of the Chinese leaders is not to allow the destructive hurricane on to the territory of the People's Republic of China. At the time they are racking their brains in China about how to save the communist regime in the neighbouring Asian countries. Another of Beijing's concerns is how to prevent the establisment of an indivisible hegemony by the United States in the APR. From the point of view of the Chinese, that's exactly where things are heading and if Washington's ambition is realized, new hardships await mankind. Beijing is no less irritated by the success of Taiwan policy of building bridges with the former USSR and Eastern Europe.

On the one hand it would like to gain the leading position in Southeast Asia and is ready to solve troublesome matters in its southern underbelly by force. On the other hand it is striving to keep the flow of large-scale economic help coming from abroad.

The last factor contributes to the flexibility of the foreign policy of the PRC, but everything else is creating a medium for xenophobia, cruelty, and a militaristic mood. Such phenomena could intensify. A crisis is looming for the Chinese leaders. With the departure of the old veterans possessing indisputable authority, there will be a political vaccuum. There are no civilized or clear cut rules worked out for replacing them. It not just a matter of individuals and party-mafia groups jostling for power, but confrontation along political and ideological lines. And the contradictions between them will increase the difficulties the country will experience. The chronic economic ulcers (the ineffectiveness of the state enterprises, the imbalance of supply

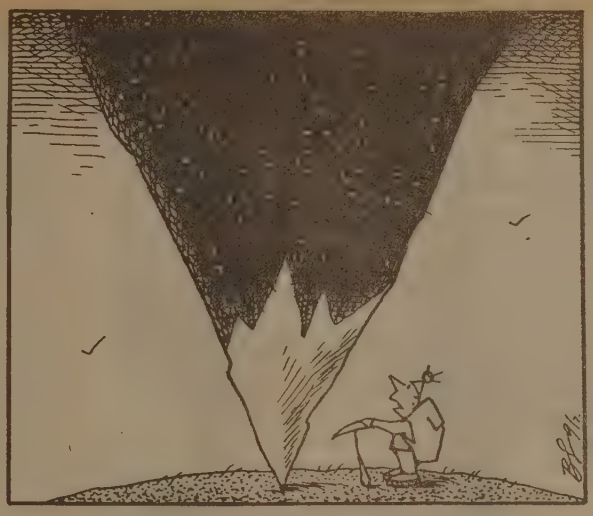
and demand, the slow growth of the productivity of labour and technological backwardness in production, the low quality of the products) is insuperable with the existing centrally planned-market socialist economy.

The social and ethnic contradictions are fermenting in Chinese society hidden under the almost impenetrable cover of the censorship. Dissatisfaction with the authorities or simply the conditions of life has infected great masses of workers, peasants, small entrepreneurs and especially the intellectuals and the students. Nor has the ferment in the army or the party been dampened. The centrifugal forces in the state where regionalism and parochialism have always been a threat to unity are gathering momentum. An ideological dead end is obvious.

All the problems of China today are the natural product of the totalitarian, one-party Leninist-Maoist system. They can only be solved by going over to a new system. However there is no organized democratic opposition in the country which could carry out the changeover smoothly and painlessly. Two routes are more likely in the PRC. The first is the destruction of the system, something that would be long, tormenting, and dangerous for the whole world. The second, more probable way is the replacement of the archaic regime with its modern totalitarian comrade-in-arms. The new, more pragmatic leaders of the party-state government will throw off the odeological tinsel and put the accent on the nationalistic approach and military might.

"Hot spots" after the Cold War

The process of transformation of the other communist regimes in Asia promises to be painful. Mongolia took decisive steps to tear down the political and economic institutions of the past. However, the building of a new society has not really commenced. The proximity to the USSR and to China threatens to turn the groping Mongolia into the object of the next round of hostilities of the two superpowers. The Vietnam communists hope to prevent the fall of their rule thanks to far-going liberalism in the economic sphere. But sooner or later the businessmen will want to get rid of the "dead weight". There is no guarantee that when this occurs blood won't be spilled and other countries won't suffer.



Drawing by Vladimir Semerenko

The greatest danger, though, is from the situation in North Korea because of the resistance of those in power to change, their innumerable crimes against their own people and also the existence of South Korea with its more attractive government which is antagonistic to Pyongyang. For many years the Norht Korean government was propped up by its ideological allies. Now there is no longer anyone to help it. The USSR and the East European countries have ceased to be donors, and even Beijing, though it would like to keep a socialist abutment in Korea, has begun to count its money. The North Korean dictators (father Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il) can do nothing but begin to open the doors to the world and ask for (not steal as the North Korean agents have always done abroad in the past) money, goods and the technology of the capitalists. They are being pushed in this direction by harsh necessity and the mood of the more intelligent and honest officials of the regime, and finally those Chinese who understand that without openness and other reforms things will go badly for socialist Korea.

Not only material, but cultural values will break through the open doors. Society will begin to change. And here much depends on the wisdom of South Korea, the USA, and Japan. If the course of event is arificially hurried in the north, a shock will be inevitable. The ruling class in North Korea are many and strong, and though they are in the mood for reform, it does not at all mean that they're about to agree to their own liquidation. They will begin to resist interference from without and mercilessly destroy the home grown insurgents. It is evidently preferable to let North Korea gradually open up and just as gradually and peacefully change.

It is possible to notice other clouds on the horizon of the Pacific Ocean. How will Japan behave after the end of the Cold War? The ambitions of this thriving country, the economic friction with the US and the instability of the world could push Tokyo onto the path of militarism. If that happens, there would be a whole chain of counterreactions on the part of China and other countries of the APR.

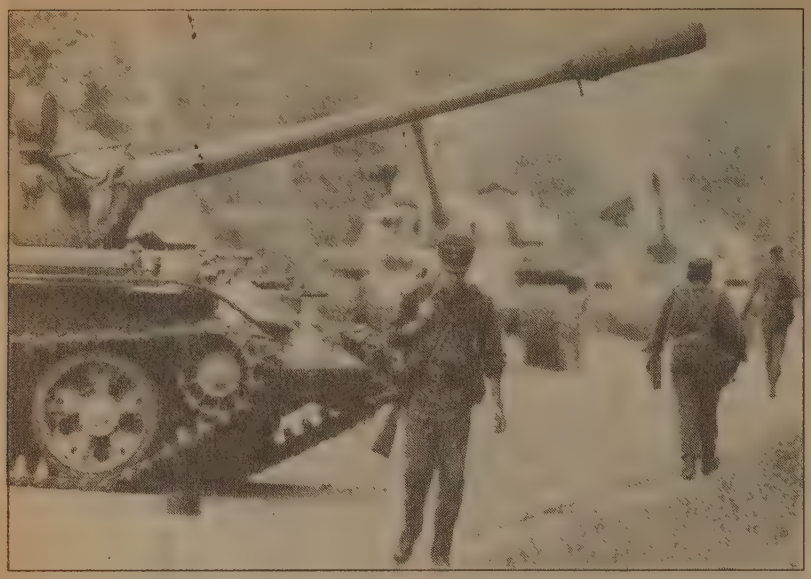
Surfacing or about to surface are new problems which remained in a state of "slumber" or were subdued by force in the epoch of Soviet-America global confrontation. The internal political, social, ethnic, and religious cataclysms could deepen in the Philippines, on the Pacific islands again flare up in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. There is also a threat lurking in the unresolved territorial claims between the USSR and Japan, China and Japan, the USSR and China, China, Malaysia and the Philippines, and China and Vietnam; in the economic rivalry between the majority of the APR countries; and in the hegemonic claims and the ethnic enmity between Malaysia and Singapore.

Without the American presence?

The question arises of how the keep the situation in the APR in hand. Until recently Moscow saw the root of all misfortune in the Pacific as the result of the intrigues of the Americans. It was thought that if the American troops left the region the people would live in peace and be happy. Now it is clear that, first of all, it was not Washington that caused the majority of the troubles, and secondly, the presence of the Pentagon in the Pacific Ocean basin had a stabilizing effect. A hurried departure would provoke an uncontrollable arms race between Japan, China, the two Koreas, and even the remaining countries of the APR. At the same time, to only look to the good will of the White House to provide stability and peace means to become the hostage of American vagaries and aspirations. In any case, the growing nationalism in the countries of the Pacific Ocean region and the aggravation of internal problems will make it necessary for Washington to reduce its military presence there.

While the Americans think over when and what to do, the world community should seriously go about creating an all-encompassing system of economic, political and military security in the APR. Without this the region may turn into an arena of destructive economic rivality, political confrontation and wars.

Nikolai Anin



Borders: a bone of contention

Only the complete disintegration of the federation can stop the ethnic war

The current war between Serbs abd Croats in Yugoslavia is now in its fifth month. Military hostilities sweep over a vast territory between the Danube and the Adriatics. According to Western sources, almost 200,000 armed men are engaged in fighting on either side. The grim death toll runs into the thousands. An all-destructive fire of war rages on, and there are no signs of its abating. General mobilization to the armed forces has been initiated in Croatia, and partial mobilization, in Serbia. Cities, industrial centres, and cultural monuments are perishing on the pyre.

Why have the Balkans' Slavic nations once again hit the path of war?

The almost 15-century-long history of the southern Slavic nations in the Balkans has seen but short periods of peace. They often had to defend their independence in struggles against neighbouring aggressive powers: Byzantium, Turkey, Venice, and the Holy Roman Empire. That struggle stimulated the desire for unity in Serbs, Croats, Montenegrins, and Slovenes, as well as the fear of loosing their own national identity.

The Ottoman Empire ruled the Balkans for half a millennium. Almost all of Slovenia was controlled by German feudal lords for 11 centuries. Montenegro managed to shed foreign rule only in 1796, in a culmination of a series of uprisings. Russia's victory in its war against Turkey in 1877-78 brought independence to Serbia. But Croatia, Slovenia, and formerly Turkish Bosnia and Herzegovina remained under the Hapsburgs until the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after WWI.

On December 1, 1918, Serbia, Montenegro, and former Yugoslav provinces of Austro-Hungary formed a kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, which since 1929 was known as the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. That union satisfied the ancient aspirations of the majority of southern Slavs but simultaneously boosted the separatist tendencies in the former Austro-Hungarian provinces, particularly Croatia, which had joined Serbia and accepted the legitimacy of the Serbian Karageorgevich royal dynasty. Serbia's leading role in the kingdom was largely opposed in Croatia.

To satisfy that aspiration, Hitler proclaimed an "Independent State of Croatia" soon after his troops occupied Yugoslavia in 1941. The rest of Yugoslavia was divided between Germany's allies. Rulers of the "independent Croatia" served the German Führer faithfully. In his superb book *Kaputt* (which unfortunately was never translated into Russian) Italian Curzio Malaparte described his visit with Croatia's leader, Ante Pavelic, during which Pavelic showed him a large dish full of what Malaparte at first mistook for oysters but then recognized as human eyes. The eyes had been taken out of the heads of Serbian anti-fascists by Pavelic's ustashis who, incidentally, exterminated 700,000 men and women, mainly Serbs, in the Jasenovac concentration camp in 1941–45. People never forget things like that.

However, aspiration for Yugoslav unity didn't peter out even then. Christian Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, and Moslem Slavs fought the occupants and collaborators' forces side by side. Regretfully though, differences between nations and confessions were not ironed out during the four and a half decades after WWII, despite cultural and economic advances. Not even satisfactory principles of co-habitation of nations in a multi-national federation were developed and introduced in Yugoslavia. When the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was in control of the country, it fairly well succeeded in containing the separatist tendencies existing in the federation's individual republics through the inculcated ideological integrity and the party's structural unity. But this integrating factor was removed when the public's socialist orientation was abandoned. Opposition parties of nationalist orientation prevailed over Communists and declared the reintegration of Yugoslavia and the self-determination of its republics as a political priority.

These goals effectively secured the parties' electoral success almost everywhere in Yugoslavia. But the implementation of such programmes was stalled by serious impediments, primarily the controversy over the borders issue.

While the situation is comparatively simple in the case of Slovenia, since Slovenes live in a close community by the Julian Alps and speak a distinct language (which makes it easy to convert the border of their republic into the border of their independent state), the Croatian issue is far more complex. That republic is populated not only by Croats: for centuries it has been a melting pot with different southern Slavic tribes migrating through the land northwards and westwards, ousted by Ottoman Turkish hordes. The "ethnic diffusion" continued after WWII as well, caused by development of the country's industrial projects. Millions of peasants migrated to cities. Mixed marriages became common, giving rise to a new

ethnic category: Yugoslavs (who now account for five percent of Yugoslavia's population).

Croatia adopted a Constitution proclaiming the republic a Croatian national state. But Serbs have been living there for centuries (today Croatia's Serbian community numbers 600,000). Serbs are determined to remain citizens of the Yugoslav federation. Serbian leaders accuse Croatian authorities of genocide against Serbs.

The current conflagration is in fact a war between Serbs and Croats over the territory. The territorial dispute is utterly meaningless, since the two nations are fairly close to each other: they speak the same language (Serbo-Croatian), they share common customs, traditions and culture. The only difference is confessional: Serbs are Orthodox Christians, and Croats are Catholic Christians.

Today Yugoslavian inner borders are turning into frontlines, with the sounds of automatic weapons, the wailing of flying mortar shells, and the thunder of artillery fire and rockets muffling the inner voice of reason. The bloodshed continues in defiance of nine consecutive (and broken) ceasefire agreements. Several international peacemaking missions have also failed. As soon as three months (a moratorium on independence of the two republics in Yugoslavia's north-west, envisaged by the EC-mediated agreement) expired, Slovenian and Croatian parliaments confirmed their respective republics' full independence. The parliaments declared these sessions "historic events" which introduced two more independent states into the Old World, and urged diplomatic recognition from other countries.

However, the world community is not in a hurry to grant it. In this connection, noteworthy is the opinion of the British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Sir Douglas Hurd, revealed in a BBC interview:

"To recognize Slovenian and Croatian independence now would be a counterproductive decision only escalating the confrontation. If both Slovenia and Croatia insist on their independence, it can be reached only through agreements on a peaceful divorce and establishment of borders, as well as on guarantees of the rights of the minorities.

In other words, the world community would rather avoid uncontrolled disintegration of the Yugoslavian federation. Nevertheless, the artillery shooting in the north-west accompanies the "silent disintegration" of Yugoslavia in the south-east and south. People in Macedonia voted, through a referendum, for the republic's sovereignty and independence from the rest of the federation. The parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina endorsed a memorandum on the republic's sovereignty, proposed by the Moslem Party of Democratic Action and backed by the Croatian Democratic Alliance Party. The Serbian faction walked out on the voting. Serbs account for over a third of Bosnia and Herzegovina's population. The parliament's decision only added fuel to the fire. Bosanska Krajina, Romanija, Eastern Herzegovina, and Semberija with predominantly Serbian populations have proclaimed their autonomy within the republic and pledged their allegiance to the federation.

What is the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia in for? Perhaps it will lose two of its attributes: a future Yugoslavia is going to be neither "socialist" nor "federative."

Yugoslavian social and political circles are discussing three options for solution of the key issues, three alternative ways to break the internal deadlock.

The League of Communists — Movement for Yugoslavia, a political organization operating mainly in the armed forces and therefore dubbed "party for the generals," aims to preserve Yugoslavia as an unitary state at any cost. The party's credo is: "Socialism in Yugoslavia has been neither defeated nor brought to its knees."

The other concept is based on the belief that Yugoslavia can rally some of the republics into a confederation, and the remaining republics, into an economic commonwealth. That plan is supported by the platform led by Alija Izetbegovic and Kiro Gligorov, presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia respectively. Quite a few people abroad, including in the EC, support the idea of such a transformation, which would result in a change of the name of the current SFRY, but not its state borders.

Yet another concept which seems to be most realistic and offers the best human solution possible under the given conditions has been put forwards by Dobrica Cosic, a prominent writer and academy member. Cosic regards Yugoslavia's disintegration as an inevitability. He believes that now the task is to minimize the loss to be suffered by the peoples of Yugoslavia and also to stop the bloodshed.

Cosic sees the hectic policy of ultimatums aimed at preservation of Yugoslavia within its current borders and with all existing internal boundaries, pursued by the EC, the USSR, USA, and Yugoslavia's neighbouring states, as inadequate.

He believes that "those countries should rather promote 'Scandinavization' of Yugoslavia, aimed at ensuring greater stability in the Balkans and in southern Europe. Yugoslavia can break up into another set of dwarfish states, in addition to Liechtenstein, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, and Luxemburg. Various political autonomy options are possible, as well as various modes of their relations with countries which would guarantee them maximum rights and development possibilities. Massive resettlement and population exchanges could be a painful solution but a better alternative to life marked by mutual hatred and feuds. Any military solution would be infinitely more painful and insecure."

It's hard to see now which option will be chosen. But one thing is very clear: the war of extermination must be stopped. Bloodshed escalates violence but leads nowhere. This was the theme bespoken by Mikhail Gorbachev and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, on October 15 in Moscow, on the initiative of the Soviet President. The talks resulted in a tripartite communiqué on principles of peaceful settlement in Yugoslavia. The communiqué urges an immediate cease-fire and commits top Serbian and Croatian leaders to talks (to be held within a month thereafter) aimed at "establishment of a stable peace and good-neighbourliness" between the two Yugoslav nations on the basis of respect for the peoples' sovereign rights and acknowledging Serbia and Croatia's equality. Presidents of the two republics have appealed to the USSR, USA, and the EC to mediate in the peace talks.

Serbs and Croats will have to patch up their quarrel and divide between themselves whatever there is to be divided, in the spirit of goodwill. The easiest way will be to constitute Serbian "Monacos" and Croatian "Liechtensteins" for the ethic minorities, should they so wish, in agreement with other republics. To organize massive resettlement of dozens of thousands people and "population exchanges" would amount to a more complicated operation costing tens of billions of dollars. But how can a bordeline be drawn between a loving couple, a Croat and a Serb? And what about the minds and feelings of their darling children?

Vasily Zhuravsky

When the celebration is over

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have become independent states. The passions died down. Humdrum life has set in

In the Baltics, opinions about the future vary from fears of dreadful cold setting in as a result of cutting off the natural oil supply from Russia to assurances of the standard of living soon reaching the level of that of the Nordic nations ("because in the past, life in the Baltics was of a higher quality than in Finland").

The military aspect of secession is likewise viewed differently. Some say that it is a stab in Russia's back (a gap in the anti-missile and anti-aircraft defence of the USSR/Russia). Others believe that the "occupation army" has to leave before this December 1. There is a whole spectrum of opinions between those two poles.

However, the Baltics will remain neighbours with Russia, Belarus, and, perhaps, the USSR, which calls for a serious analysis of the situation and mutual acceptance of the given reality in the north-western corner of the crumbling empire.

First of all, it is necessary to dispell the myth about the unity of the Baltic states. True, they are unanimous in their common disgust for the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and in their rejection of everything Soviet (except for property). But historically and politically they have very little in common. Catholic Lithuania was independent and powerful for centuries, while Lutheran Latvia and Estonia practically never were independent. Lithuanians have, since long ago, been looking towards Germany, while the direction of Latvians' and Estonians' orientation was Scandinavia. The three states developed their first and shaky unity only during WWI and the second Russian revolution, which culminated in the 1934 Baltic Pact. They tried to coordinate their efforts in the spheres of defence and foreign policy but with little effect. Today they have a Baltic Council forged by politicians of the three nations and representing an "embryo" of regional cooperation, however short-lived it may seem.

Together or divided?

The three republics don't have much common ground for mutual economic integration. They don't depend much on mutual supplies (below 10 percent, in real terms), but they share a dependence on Soviet imports (62–65 percent). Their national economies are rather similar in structure and therefore they compete for the Western economies' attention. Estonia is farthest on the way to economic reform, with Latvia far behind it and Lithuania barely leaving the starting line. Lithuania has a reliable source of electricity, the Ignalina atomic power plant ("imposed on Lithuania by Moscow"). Estonia will be able to make ends meet in terms of electricity supply for another decade and a half, thanks to the industry of oil-shales mining ("imposed by Moscow"). But Latvia is hard put in this respect (because Moscow didn't "impose" a similar industry upon Latvia). None of the three sister-nations is prepared to share its assets with the other, in a good-neighbourly spirit.

They will have to annually import energy carriers worth 2,000, 500, and 1,000 million dollars, respectively. In real terms, fuels are best bought from Russia which is interested in continuing to use sea ports in Ventspils and Klaipeda for its oil export to the West, as well as continuing to use an oil refinery in Mazeikiai, Lithuania, which produces among other things, fuel for aircraft, and in transporting, via Lithuania, electricity to Kaliningrad Region (Russian Federation). This can be paid for by sharing hard-currency proceeds from the sale of the oil or by sharing the oil itself. Some kind of compromise can be reached on the issue of the Ignalina APP which feeds electric current to Belarus as well and cannot be properly maintained without help from Russia. St.Petersburg and Pskov had to stop purchasing electricity from Estonia because it was too expensive. In addition, Estonia will have to purchase black oil and equipment for the power plant in Narva, which forms a good basis for an economic agreement.

However, the problems are not confined to the realm of power engineering, unfortunately. True, the per-capita national income in the Baltics is higher by 10-20 percent than in the USSR. Living standards and labour productivity are also higher. In addition, the republics are the sole producers of certain commodities in the USSR (Lithuania, for example, is the sole producer of 20 such items). But what is the use? Will they be buying radios and TV sets from each other (17 and 6 percent, respectively, of the USSR overall output)? They are of Soviet make and correspondingly inferior in quality, and the whole world, including the Baltics, prefers Japanese-made electronic gadgets.

Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark are across the Baltic Sea. Trade and other economic contacts between those countries are much more extensive than between the three Baltic states. However, the economies of the Nordic countries are also oriented to other markets, primarily the EC market. The Nordic Council promoted by affluent Scandinavian nations is active in culture and social work but not in politics and economies. Appeals to establish a Greater Baltic Council with open national borders and markets are not heeded as a serious proposal. Today, the "poor" nations of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia are invited to build one home for themselves, detached from the European house.

So far, the "trio" are far from accepting the idea of a political alliance between them, and the idea itself somehow doesn't sound convincing. The leaders of the Baltic states would have to do work comparable to Heracles' exploits, in order to achieve a local common market based on the much-advertised "horizontal economic linkage." Such a market would not be viable even if it were born. The market economy demands orientation towards other partners.

A window towards the West, a doorway towards the East

The above-mentioned is an open secret for domestic as well as foreign experts. Yet the ministers and MPs almost never mention this truth either for political considerations or because of their professional incompetence. The "heretics" are bludgeoned by the following argument: we are going to be OK as soon as we quit the USSR and join Europe. The secession from the USSR is a fact, but entering Europe can be real only in the next millennium.

The thesis about massive aid in dollars, DM, British pounds, and kroner doesn't seem convincing either. Before Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became independent, the West issued vague promises, and now the EC is not in a hurry to cash the required 2.5-3.5 billion dollars of annual aid, while Scandinavian nations pay puny sums to finance programmes like training of personnel, or environmental studies. The entire capital of the Baltic Investment Bank created by Western nations is merely $350mln, while the expected Swedish aid is going to be even less impressive. Incidentally, Sweden, applying in its time for the EC membership, promised to donate one billion dollars annually to finance the de-

Coats of arms: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

velopment programmes aimed at the Community's "poor" members like Potugal.

The Baltics with their 8.4 million population is by no means a large and paying market for large investments. This is a humiliating truth for the Baltics population enjoying the highest rate of bank savings in the Soviet Union — over 2,000 rubles per resident — but their ruble savings can't buy them much and besides they are kept in the USSR State Savings Bank. But is it possible to produce exportable merchandise in the Baltics? There is a possibility, only if the potential investors can be made to see that Lithuanian butter is better in quality than Danish butter, that German minibuses are inferior to the similar produced in Latvia, or that Estonian-made electric motors are more reliable than ones produced in the UK. It is indeed a difficult task, considering that other countries, Poland for example, have an edge in that competition for foreign investments.

Voices calling for continued orientation towards cooperation with the former "inmates" in the "socialist camp" also receive little credit. The "trio" will indeed be able to barter its farm produce and consumer goods for oil from Tyumen and steel from Kuzbass, but this is going to be hardly enough to satisfy the domestic need, to say nothing about export. Another option is more realistic: to exploit the Baltics' unique geographical position between European nations and Russia and supplement the all-permeating ties with the East with the development of business contacts with the West. New Baltic ministers think it a disgrace to act as intermediaries in business deals. However, Western experts consider that role as the only correct one under the circumstances. Practically all the joint-venture companies (the Baltics have over 10 percent of such operating in the former Soviet Union) are engaged in mediation. Optimists even speak about turning the Baltics into another Hong Kong, or in something akin to Chinese littoral free economic zones.

The West's interest in the USSR/Russian market and vice versa opens up a possibility to engage the Baltics' transportation routes, industrial plants, work force, and intellectual potential in business for all partners to profit. It will be recalled that in the Middle Ages, the well-being of the Hanseatic League was rooted largely in the trade between Russia and Europe. The Baltics is going to experience an economic boom if it becomes Russia's outlet to Europe, and Europe's outlet to Russia. Catering to the interests of the former "fraternal nations," rather than shouldering them out, would attract foreign investment to the region.

Earliest possible economic stabilization of the region and political realization of the region's own role are the most important pre-conditions. Conditions for normal operation of the market (legislation, etc.) must be created, and state property must be privatized. But so far, there's been little progress in this critical sphere, which is explained both by subversive activity on the part of the USSR central bodies of power and blunders committed by local politicians and chauvinistically-minded bureaucrats. New leaders begrudgingly take in the rules of a free market. Administering remains their favourite method.

There's still life in the old dog

Improvement of the economic situation is likely to happen in the Baltics in 7–10 years' time, which is going to be earlier than elsewhere in the USSR. The Baltics' crucial advantage is its small size (3 percent of the USSR population and GNP and even less of its territory). This explains the fact that the problems here are scaled down, including the number and size of plants to be modernized and the number of redundant bureaucrats.

The "human factor" is particularly important here, because many people still remember the market from their own experience. Collectivization of the farms and state control over the industries happened there only as late as by 1950. Sexagenarians still share their market experience with the younger generations. Respect for one's work still persists. The level of education and professional skills and knowledge is still high. New leaders are going to enjoy people's trust for some time still. Last but not least, there is an important factor of a million-strong diaspora, people of Latvian, Estonian, and Lithuanian extraction residing in the West. Some of them are willing to share their knowledge and experience and use their connections and invest their money.

If the GDR served as a propaganda model among the socialist countries, then the Baltics play the same role with respect to the USSR. The Baltics have the most advanced part of the former USSR national economy, including some of the defence projects. There are fairly good roads and communications lines there. For example, there are 198 telephones per every 1,000 residents in the Baltics, against 32 in the USSR in general. Agricultural farms can produce enough to meet not only local needs, and local Baltic Sea ports can handle a lot of trade cargo. All that creates a solid base for further economic development.

The West is prepared to help the Baltics up, and the reforming Soviet Union is willing to preserve its economic ties with the region. Economic cooperation will contribute to the solution of political and military problems inherited from the former Soviet empire.

Alexander Polyukhov,
our own correspondent
STOCKHOLM

Help, anyone!

Where are the money and credits to come from? How are we to use billions, should they ever come our way?

Drawing from the Guardian (Great Britain)

Much is being written, and still more said, about the need for Western aid. At its regular annual session, held recently, the International Monetary Fund adopted a decision to render the USSR humanitarian aid worth 7.5 billion dollars. A few days earlier, Tokyo had announced its intention to grant us 2.5 billion in emergency aid as part of the above-mentioned sum. A week before that the EC countries set their share at 2.4 billion, and the US, at 1.5 billion.

The bacchanal of figures related to the amount of aid we need has been on for months. On the eve of the Soviet President's trip to London for the G-7 Summit last summer, the sums of 30 billion a year and 150 billion in five years were named as our country's minimum money requirements. A few weeks ago, Yu.Luzhkov asked the EC for 14-odd billion dollars without substantiating the need for this sum. Within just a few days, the request was cut down to 10 and event 7 billion.

In every case, the West referred to these sums as "aid." This term has been caught up in the USSR, although no one here is quite sure about its meaning.

Let's agree on terminology

The notion of "aid" is used in the West in both broad and narrow senses. In a broad sense, aid means transfers of capital from country to country (from developed to developing countries, for the most part) in whatever form: as direct portfolio investments, loans, credits, subsidies and gifts. In the narrow sense aid means money granted by the Economic Cooperation and Development Organization member-states to developing countries on favourable terms within the framework of the "official development aid" programmes.

From an economic standpoint, the USSR is regarded by many in the West as a developing country. Consequently, all forms of capital transfers from abroad are referred to as "aid."

Actually, this aid is given in at least three different forms: financial, technical and humanitarian. The first kind includes the export of entrepreneurial capital and its investment in the enterprises under construction or already in operation in the USSR fully or partly owned by the investor; the granting of loans (credits) – the export of loan capital with interest; subsidizing – the granting by the state of tax, customs, insurance and other benefits to exporters or importers; and gifts – a gratis handover of financial resources. As we see, it is only gifts that can be regarded as immediate aid, while all the other forms of financial "aid" actually amount to investments for profit.

Technical "aid" consists in one country sharing its scientific, technical and industrial knowledge with another. Experts are sent over, consultations given, training centres built, documents drawn up, and so on. These services can be called aid if granted free of charge or on easy terms. In all other cases, they fall into the commercial cooperation category.

Finally, humanitarian aid is the only form of aid without inverted commas attached to it. This aid includes free provision of equipment, medical supllies and food in force-majeure circumstances (drought, natural calamity, war...).

Speaking of "aid" to the Soviet Union, this term has a specific meaning in each particular case. Therefore, in order to avoid misunderstanding or self-deception in considering this or that aid offer, we ought to ask ourselves and our partner: is this aid offered free of charge, or expected to be paid for? Paid "aid" can be regarded as such only if aid means the Western countries' very readiness to grant it.

Who are the donors?

Those forces in the West which accept the idea of rendering the USSR "aid" in the broad sense of the word prefer not to point out its concrete sources. There are three such sources: international financial organizations, Western governments and private business. The leading international financial organizations are the World Bank and the IMF, of which the USSR is an associate rather than a full member, and the EC. Last year, the World Bank issued credits worth 24.2 billion dollars, only three of them to Eastern Europe. The bulk of the funds is going to the developing countries, and it is rather difficult to have our name added to those organizations' list of recipients.

Loans will be forthcoming on the condition that the USSR becomes a full member of the World Bank and the IMF. In the case of the IMF, for instance, this will take, apart from political will, certain monetary expenditures: the USSR will have to contribute

about six percent of the IMF's authorized capital, or nearly 10.4 billion dollars. 125 percent of the sum can be retrieved right away, but in instalments: first, the so-called "reserved share" (25 percent) and then the other 100 percent within the framework of four "credit shares," and the receipt of each has ever tougher conditions. Consequently, in the first stage of its IMF membership the USSR may reckon upon no more than 2.5 billion in new credits. Later on, however, as the USSR gains access to other credit mechanisms of the IMF, the amounts of credits may grow to 607 percent of the USSR's quota in the Fund's authorized capital.

Western governments cannot meet Soviet capital requirements, either. At Japanese economists' estimate, Japan has more "spare cash" than any other country – 50 billion; the FRG, 10 billion; the other industrialized countries taken together, 30 billion, as much as the rich developing countries (Taiwan, Venezuela, the United Arab Emirates, and others). The international organizations can mobilize 20 billion. This makes a total of 140 billion. The highest demand for capital is made by the USA (70 billion) and other industrialized countries (120 billion). Total: 190. The deficit of capital is about 50 billion, and the USSR stands no chance of getting the capital already intended for the Western world.

Private banks and companies which possess capital will not offer it before the loans granted by international organizations and Western governments bring positive results. In the meantime they will try to dictate to the USSR, through the lips of politicians, all sorts of conditions, only after the fulfillment of which may we count on their benevolence. These are political conditions: we are supposed to stabilize the political situation in the country, to settle ethnic conflicts, to make our state structure more definite, to change over to real multiparty democracy, to democratize the political process and to observe human rights. As far as economic conditions are concerned, we are to pull out of crisis, to stabilize our finance and monetary circulation, to guarantee ruble convertibility, to settle our foreign debt problems, to provide real guarantees for foreign capital...

These conditions may be described as "an offer of a chance." Originally, however, they are referred to as "The IMF Standard Plan for Developing Countries." Experts have been familiar with this plan for decades.

The recipients

Before they decide whether or not to grant us "aid," Western donors would like to make it clear who wields real power in the USSR today and with whom they are to deal.

Option 1. "Aid" should be given to the USSR's legal successor in paying back and servicing the foreign debt, i.e. to the entity which undertakes to pay back all debts, the past and future ones. In the agreement on the economic community, this problem is dealt with as follows: this economic community is the legal successor to all the foreign commitments; it is to set up a bank – the legal successor to the Bank of Foreign Economic Affairs of the USSR; it is to sign an agreement defining the role of the subject of the former Union in the total sum of foreign debt payments. As we see, these provisions do not make it quite clear who is going to pay back the debts. In addition, there arises a separate problem involving the republics which have declined to accede to the Treaty. Who is going to pay their debts to the rest of the republics and to foreign countries?

Option 2. Aid should be given to the Centre, as before, and credits granted on Gorbachev's responsibility. The arguments "for": the Centre retains its functions of paper money emission (be it through the State Bank or the Banking Union) and, consequently, its decisive influence on the stability of the finance system and the economy as a whole, without which the payment of debts is impossible; the Centre still has the infrastructure for receiving and distributing "aid" (banks, ministries, semi-state corporations, etc.). Arguments "against": the "aid" will be impersonal and may get stolent before it reaches the recipient; the Centre has little real power left for a rational distribution of aid: a "tug of war" will break out between the republics anyway.

Option 3. Aid should be granted to the republics – to Russia, the Ukraine and Kazakhstan, above all (the Baltic republics' political independence sets them apart from the others). Arguments "for": relative strength of the republics' governments backed by popular support; closeness to the concrete users of "aid." Arguments "against": the republics' lack of currency and gold reserves of their own; continued uncertainty as to whether they are prepared to pay their common foreign debt togeher; inadequacy of the legislative base; the war of the republican and local government bodies.

Besides, we should bear it in mind that the IMF and the the World Bank grant "aid" only to the governments of independent states against their guarantees. The problems connected with technical "aid" can be dealt with, in principle, at the level of the revelant ministries and other government bodies. As for humanitarian "aid," as rendered by the Red Cross, for instance, it can be sent directly to hospitals, orphanages and veterans' organizations.

How to use aid?

Even if the West does find tens of billions of dollars to spare on "aid" to the USSR, the country will not be able to "digest" it. Multi-billion credits will, at best, go into emergency stropgap programmes or, at worst, get lost altogether. It is not to be ruled out that Soviet authorities may fail to organize the delivery to the country of the commodities these dollars will buy. The infrastructure is in shambles, modern communications are in a rudimentary state, and our roads couldn't be worse.

If, in spite of everything, the USSR gets Western "aid" in this or that form at all, we shall hardly be able to leave our options open as to how to use it. Knowing from their bitter experience that credits may disappear completely on the receiving end, Western governments, banks and international organizations will, from now on, lend us money to finance our purpose-oriented programmes (for improving our balance of payments, for food supply to Moscow or for the development of the Tengiz deposit, to give just a few examples), only provided that every arrangement is made for the Western side to exercise control over the way this money is used.

The West will agree to render us "aid" only in the spheres of interest to it. For instance, it is prepared to help us improve food supply to the population lest a social explosion should break out; to service our foreign debt lest the USSR should be proclaimed insolvent; to offer us consultations on problems of privatization, free enterprise and transition to the free-market economy; to give us a hand in developing our natural resources; to grant us credits for purchasing products from the donor country's companies. This "aid" will be given in instalments, with subsequent instalments available only after the terms attached to the previous instalment have been complied with.

Such is standard international practice. Harsh as it is, we shall have to conform to it.

Alexei Kireyev,
D.Sc. (Economics)

SECRET SERVICES

They called me Klara in Moscow

Elli Bronina

Excerpts from reminiscences of a Soviet secret agent

When the Frenchwoman Renée Marceau tore up her Dutch passport in Berlin, she became Denisa from Uruguay

...In the spring of 1934 I graduated from a Soviet intelligence training centre. In the middle of March I left the USSR for Shanghai via Berlin and Italy.

I carried two passports: one to Berlin and the other for the rest of the trip. The first passport was issued in the name of a Dutchwoman, whose name I found difficult to pronounce: I was afraid I might forget or mispronounce it. Before that I had no trouble in crossing borders: my face was so naive and friendly that I could hardly be suspected of any evil intentions. But at that time I was really scared. However, things went smoothly. Acting as I had been told, I placed my luggage at the Berlin station cloak room, went to a big department store, locked myself up in the ladies' room, tore up and flushed down my Dutch passport and chewed and swallowed the photo from it, as the instruction commanded. I left the ladies' room as Mrs Denisa from Uruguay. This was the plan my superiors worked out for me after they checked my command of the Spanish language I had learnt together with German at a French high school.

I spent one night in a Berlin hotel. As I repacked my things, I saw something that scared the daylights out of me: my alpine skiing boots were stuffed with pages torn from the Soviet magazine *Bolshevik*. I burned the sheets, stuffed the boots with German papers and told myself to be more cautious next time. This is a usual mistake when you carry things you don't really need. Obviously, I had very little use for alpine skiing boots in Shanghai.

I arrived in Milan on the following day. In Milan, I was to inform the Service that I was OK. To do this, I was to place the following ad in *Corriere della Sera:* a lady has lost her favourite white dog and will generously pay anyone who finds it.

In Venice, I found myself in a pretty nasty situation. I had been told to arrive in Trieste on the 24th and to get on one of the two steamers that sailed for Shanghai on the 26th of each month: the Conte Verde and the Conte Rosso. When I arrived there I discovered that the steamers actually sailed for Shanghai on the 16th. Someone's ten-day error landed me in a hopeless situation. I had very little money and life was exorbitantly expensive for foreigners in Italy. I would not have been able to last until the 16th of the next month, besides, I was expected in Shanghai and could not afford to arrive there a month late. I went to Trieste hoping to find some Shanghai-bound merchantman: sometimes they took passengers, too. I was lucky: I managed to find a cargo ship which offered cabins for passengers.

"You are being too observant, Signorina!"

The ship sailed via the Suez Canal, making calls to all major ports. There was a long way ahead of me and I knew I would arrive in Shanghai later than I had been instructed to. On the ship I became the object of a lot of naive courtship on the part of young ship officers, the retinue of whom followed me wherever I went on shore and showed me whatever they thought worthy of my attention. Besides the famous and universal naval gallantry towards women, they seemed to have some other interest in my person. I was young, innocent and excited and I was heading for remote lands with no one accompanying me – they might have been curious what it all was about. I had to be on my guard. Once in Bombay, for instance, we met an old man whose azure eyes were unmistakably of the European type. When I asked the officers about that man, one of them immediately replied: "You are being too observant, Signorina." I bit my lip.

In Port Said, the officers invited me to a local whorehouse, which they described as expensive and decent. We entered a spacious, luxuriously furnished sitting room and soon five or six women of

Elli Bronina was born in France and worked as a courier of the Communist International of Youth. At the age of 17 she came to the Soviet Union to be trained as a professional revolutionary. After graduation from a spy training centre in the USSR, she was sent to Shanghai and then to Spain... In the early 1940s, Elli Bronina left Intelligence to become a doctor and soon received the degree of a Candidate of Medicine. Purged from the clinic as "the wife of an enemy of the people" (her husband, a prominent officer of military intelligence, Brigadier Yakov Bronin, was repressed in 1949), she devoted herself to scientific translation. Recently, Elli Bronina has finished a book of reminiscences.

European origin appeared there. They were dressed simply and beautifully – with the elegance of millionairesses. Only the strong aroma of Oriental perfumes they were wearing betrayed their profession. Their every movement and gesture showed a remarkable amount of some innate dignity. The spectacle produced a great and lasting impression on me: perhaps because my own life was in a way similar to theirs – I was also putting everything at stake, but not for money as they did, but for the sake of ideas which do not give one peace in youth, nor prosperity in old age...

Elli Bronina: "One should not think Intelligence had radio operators planted in every house in Shanghai"

What I saw in Aden, then a protectorate of Britain, might have seemed a nightmare turned reality: a bare rock over the sea, exhausted Arabs crawling onto the ship from all sides, begging for alms and belching blood. The whole scene looked like the most perfect illustration of what colonialism was about.

On our way from Penang to Saigon we passed the island of Pulo Condore, the place where prisoners were sent for hard labour, notorious for its "tiger cages," net-covered pits, where prisoners could only sit, under the scorching sun, unable to get up. Pulo Condore was intended also for "political prisoners."

At Penang, a new passenger came on board – an Englishman owner of a rubber plantation in French Indochina. A lean athletic man, he always appeared at the table wearing a tuxedo despite the tropical heat. Once I took a closer look at him and discovered that he had nothing under his tuxedo but cuffs and shirtfront. He was bound for Saigon, and when we got there, he invited me and the officers to have a dinner at his home. If there was anything impressive about the house through which he solemnly paraded us, it was a combination of luxury and bad taste. At the end of the excursion he ushered us into his bedroom featuring a kingsize bed and a huge mirror on the opposite wall. The host nodded his head, confirming that my immediate guess was right: he would only make love to two con gai (young women in Vietnamese) at once, at the same time looking into the mirror, thus doubling the number of women. That was the gentleman's favourite pastime. Actually, colonialists of all times and nations had only one passion – slaves, male and female.

A Comintern comrade downstairs

I finally arrived in Shanghai in April and stayed in one of the two hotels which had been selected for me. A month passed, I was out of money, but nobody had contacted me yet. I was looking out of the window and onto the street, on the opposite side of which stood... the building of the Soviet consular department in Shanghai.

Finally, one rainy evening I walked far from both the consular department and the hotel and asked a riksha to get me to the consular department. As I talked to the riksha, I spoke the worst English I could produce. I jumped out of the riksha near the department, and dashed to the gates. An old Chinese man who worked for the department was standing by the gates. Fortunately for me, the old man turned a sympathetic ear to my pleas to call someone of the Soviet staff. Very soon a young man apeared in the lobby. I was lucky – he had previously seen me in Moscow at a meeting of anti-fascists with Soviet youth...

On the next day, Yakov came to my hotel room. He was under 34 then and already the head of the Soviet spy net in Shanghai. He joined Intelligence after serving as a political indoctrination officer in the Red Army. Until the age of 15 Yakov was a pious Judaist believer, but after the revolution he became an ardent promoter of the communist transformation of society. When he proposed to me some time later and I agreed to marry him, he cried aloud: "Elli! The whole world is down by our feet now! We will be making world revolution!" This sounded strange and sort of queer to me: although a devoted communist myself, I was more sceptical about the real date of the world revolution.

Yakov was happy to see me in Shanghai, first of all because I was to replace his radio operator, Willi. Yakov wanted to get rid of Willi, because, as he explained, Willi "became too fond of the bottle." There was much work to do. I acted as a radio operator and also photocopied the documents whose flow never ceased. We were helping the Red Army of China, which was in a difficult situation at that time: as the Kuomintang troops were pressing it out of the southern regions, it was getting ready for the Long March to the northern provinces. Chinese comrades helped us recruit sources, pointing out people who were either sympathetic to Communists or ready to sell any secret for money – there were a lot of traitors among Chinese officials.

I was to find a suitably-sized flat in order to deploy the 15-metre antenna during the transmission sessions. When I finally found such a flat and started working at night, I discovered that a powerful transmitter was working somewhere near me, obstructing my signals. I interrupted the transmission and reported the incident to Yakov. He inquired about it and it turned out that a Comintern comrade was working downstairs. He had to leave the flat he occupied... One should not think, though, that Soviet Intelligence had radio operators planted in every house in Shanghai – it was pure coincidence... Our work was full of all kinds of coincidences...

I forget to give Sorge the cipher

Once a source from the postal service gave us a sealed envelope with very valuable materials. He used to supply us with documents on loose sheets of paper: we could not yet break seals and seal the envelopes back again. That time Yakov was too greedy, or perhaps he hoped we might invent something to re-seal the envelope. In the evening, Yakov, who was so absent-minded, put the envelope on the radiator. At night, the radiator was turned on without warning, and in the morning, to our utter horror, we discovered that the sealing wax had melted. Yakov was desperate. Unlike him, I played it cool and suggested that

A Chinese cabaret: a possible meeting place for Soviet spies and their sources

he tell everything to the Chinese source. The official received an additional fee and gave us samples of seals which were to be restored. We were to copy the seals and the only suitable material which we could get was mercury amalgam. It was used by the dentists and was available through drugstores.

Yakov managed to get some amalgam. The job was done, the seals restored, and the documents put back. Now we had new opportunities for work. Every week I worked with amalgam. But amalgam contained mercury, and soon strange things started happening to me: I started noticing occasional blackouts, but at that time I did not attach any great importance to them, until it put the whole group in jeopardy...

Richard Sorge was working in Tokyo. He could not establish radio communication with Vladivostok. His radio operator was a brilliant specialist who could transmit a record-breaking number of signals in a minute. But that was in Moscow's Vorobyovy Gory, and in Shanghai, we could not hear him, nor could he hear us in Tokyo. Sorge was very nervous. He used to warn me half-jokingly, half-seriously: "Klärchen, clean your little ears" (they called me Klara in Moscow), but there was no progress. We decided that I would travel to Tokyo, have a look at the transmitter and try to fix it. I was also to take money and a new cipher to Tokyo.

The troubles started on the day of departure. The steamer bound for Yokohama was sailing in the evening. The legal contact, who was to bring me money, came too late and gave me Chinese dollars which I had to exchange for Japanese yen. In addition to the money, the contact also gave me a confidential document for Yakov, which was to be returned immediately upon reading. I put the document into the envelope where I kept the tickets, and forgot about it completely.

Having spent some time in Tokyo as a tourist, I met Sorge in the street. We spent half an hour chatting: in those conditions meetings with friends worked wonders, and we remembered them as long as we lived. He was the same Sorge I had known in Moscow, but he looked sadder and more preoccupied. We did not ask each other any business questions – it was not our tradition. He took me to the radio operator's flat, where I checked the transmitter and found it in perfect order. At our transmission hour I quickly tuned in to my deputy's transmission from Shanghai: he had a peculiar way of transmitting the letter "L," and I immediately established communication with him. The transmitter was in order. Sorge and I exchanged glances, then looked at the operator: he was white as chalk and his hands were trembling. It became clear that he was simply afraid of working in Tokyo. Unlike in Shanghai, there were direction finding devices in Tokyo. Soon the radio operator was sent back to the USSR.

I met Sorge one more time. We chatted about some minor things. Sorge joked that he liked Japanese women very much, found them very attractive and would like to have an affair, but was afraid. It was only after I had returned to Shanghai that I remembered about the new code. I was ordered to stop working with mercury, the more so as an expert in this field had joined the group. My health was slowly restored. I was going to have a baby and this was all I thought about. However, soon something happened that we had always been prepared for...

I spent the whole night burning documents

Once Yakov brought home a pile of Chinese documents and locked them in his safe. He did not usually keep such documents at home. He did not tell me anything about the reasons for his unusual behaviour, and I preferred not to ask. We spent the evening visiting a comrade who was to leave for Moscow soon. We left his place one by one each in a different direction. I returned home alone. Some time later some comrades who worked in China legitimately called me up and asked whether my husband was at home. I answered in the negative. "OK, then leave everything and come to our place," they said. When we met, they told me that Yakov had been arrested. A Chinaman who worked for us betrayed him. Yakov carried no documents giving his home address or the name he lived under in Shanghai, and the traitor did not know it. However, several forged passports which he had absent-mindedly taken along were found on him. Finally his identity and address might be found, the police would raid the flat and see the safe and then... Yakov could have been court-martialled and hanged. Yakov was severely beaten up in prison, but he was hard as rock and insisted he was a Frenchman who had just come to Shanghai. He claimed somebody had planted the passports on him and demanded that the police contact France to have his identity confirmed – he was trying to gain time. The police placed a picture of him in all papers. It was easy to recognize him even though his face bore the marks of beating, but the Chinese did not like to have business with the police... Yakov remained Mister X, as Shanghai newspapers dubbed him.

In such cases one first thinks about the people who are at large. Naturally, I moved to another place. We had to inform, recall and hide the people whom the Yakov arrest put into danger.

When everybody was informed, and securely covered, I could afford paying attention to Yakov. I informed the Centre that some documents that might be dangerous for him had been left in his flat, and asked if I could go and get them. The Centre replied I might not. However, I had a different opinion on that score, and I went to our old flat.

A friend of the boy who had worked for us never bothered to ask any questions and quickly opened the safe I had no keys to. I let them both go and spent the whole night burning the sinister documents.

Yakov was tried a day later. Despite scarce evidence and lack of identification, he was sentenced to fifteen years and shipped to Hankou (Wuhan) to a prison which was notorious for especially harsh conditions. The nightmare of the Chinese prison ended for Yakov in December 1937, when he was exchanged for Chiang Kai-Shek's son. After the trial I was to be somehow transferred to the USSR.

One dark rainy night I was smuggled to the port. In the dark, two officers took me aboard along a shaky plant. Soon the ship sailed for Vladivostok. The seas were rough. When the wind calmed down a day later and passengers filed out onto the deck, I saw almost all my friends from China there, including the Comintern comrade, who worked downstairs...

Photos from the author's archives and the book Old Shanghai

Make friends with Onan, a son of Judah

Anatoly Rubinov

Vodka does not decrease male potency, experienced sexologists say

Not all the dynamic men who cast seductive glances at women are as happy and virile as they appear at first glance. It is precisely the most dynamic and the tallest ones who... In his doctor's thesis, Prof. Georgy Vasilchenko, who still heads his laboratory (by now up-graded to the All-Union Scientific Methodological Centre of Sexopathology) has proved that the most athletic-looking men are by no means the best and the most successful lovers. His thesis, entitled *Quantified Studies of Male Sexual Potency* would have embarrassed many proud "he-men" labouring under the delusion that no one as much as suspects their secret suffering and could be an eye-opener to many women who regard themselves as worldly-wise and shrewd judges of men. Not even the most promiscuous woman can boast of having seen as many naked men as the Professor has. He knows more male secrets than she does and, incidentally, no Don Juan can compare with him in the knowledge of female secrets. For thirty years at a stretch, men and women have confided their – or their wives' and husbands' – most carefully guarded secrets to him, some of them blushing as they did so.

Vasilchenko heard them all out attentively and jotted what they told him down in their case histories. Then he pieced all these scraps of information together into a general picture and derived laws from it. Those who do not know foreign languages may be puzzled by the opening word of his thesis. Some may think it ostentatiously "learned," but to Vasilchenko it sounds natural: "quantum" is the Latin for "how many." The secrets of all his patients were confided to a computer which converted medicine into arithmetic, revealed a connection between anatomy and physiology, brought out anatomical indicators of physiological characteristics, helped diagnose and treat malfunctions correctly, restore sufferers to full-blooded life and even arouse in some the emotions they had despaired of ever experiencing at all.

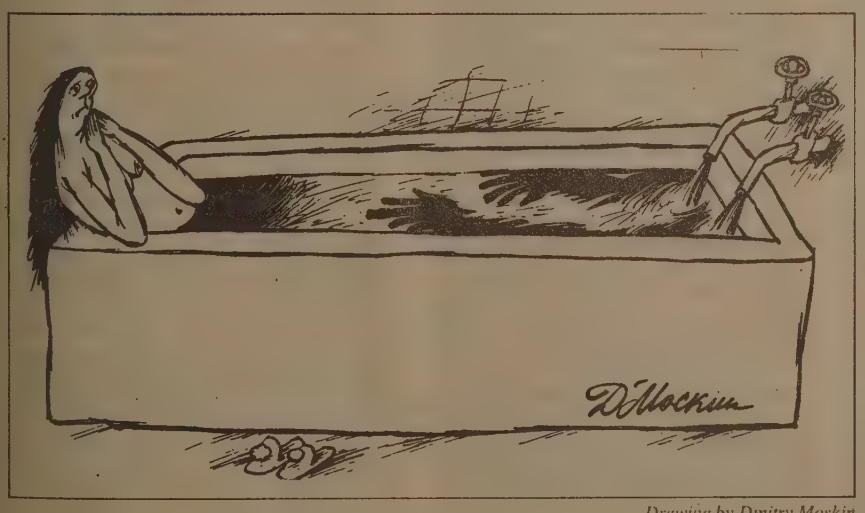
Continued. For the first and second installments see issues No. 41, 42/91.

It all started with a rather amusing incident. A pert lady brought in her husband about whom she actually had no complaints. They had been happy together for years, and she had born him children. The husband had a small defect, an innocent one which a woman can even put up with if her man is good, kind-hearted and a non-drinker. And still... The loving wife described the defect euphemistically, although the Russian language has the exact word for it. You see, she explained to the doctor, my husband has to sleep on a piece of oilcloth which our little children do not need any longer... She did not blame her husband, that was not his fault, but "you must agree, doctor, that it's not much fun to share a bed with someone who... You know..."

Georgy Stepanovich was mighty glad to have a patient like that. The thing was that the young scientist had made an interesting discovery.

In the man's brain, he found the centre responsible for two functions: regulating the duration of intimate pleasure and adjusting the operation of the bladder. A simple procedure repeated several times – without any pills taken! – put the protracted infantile disorder right, obviating the need for the damp-proof oil-cloth blanket once and for all.

The bashful husband, who was lucky to have such a squeamish wife was put through a number of procedures, after which he came back alone, beside himself with worry: the course of treatment had harmed him... No, he had no more use for the oilcloth, but he had developed a new defect he had never suffered from before. The reason he came to see the doctor alone was that he couldn't very well discuss such things in her presence... The conversation lasted for a long time and was of an educational nature. It turned out that the treatment the doctor had given the man produced a side effect: it prolonged the duration fo the climax of each intercourse considerably. That scared the consorts, the genuine children of nature, both of whom worked at a poultry farm and could watch cocks' and hens' intimate life every day. Although hens made a lot of fuss over the thing each time –



Drawing by Dmitry Moskin

probably out of sheer female cocquetry – the erotic excitement never lasted long. After the man had completed the course of treatment, the couple was shocked to discover that its every orgasm now lasted for whole five minutes – much longer than normal, as far as they could gather from their feathered charges' sex life. The wife was the first to presume that the doctor was responsible for the disorder.

Georgy Stepanovich spared no time and eloquence to explain to the poultryman how lucky he was to enjoy, with his worthy wife, the sensations of which all but twenty percent of all men could only dream.

That was the first time the doctor said what he later put down in his thesis, namely that by the skin's response to finger touches in various places, and through other simple tests it is possible to establish that the above-mentioned double function is upset – a disorder which, as we have just seen, is so easy to cure.

There exists an enormous delusion which many adults are not even willing to get rid of. It is somehow taken for granted that all males and all females are perfectly normal in every respect – with just a few exceptions. As far as the fair sex is concerned, even those intellectuals who speak no German know and often use the phrase "Ewige Weiblichkeit" ("eternal femininity") in the original – Goethe was the first to utter it. They usually mispronounce it, but at the end of the last century sexologists (who were not yet known as such then because this science appeared within the lifetime of the present generation) did not miscalculate the proportion of the women who did not know what delights they were supposed to give men: this proportion was 60 percent. Many adult and perfectly feminine ladies whom Goethe, admiring their exciting curves, would have described as "Ewige Weiblichkeit," have no idea of their true mission in life. They believe that their duties are restricted to loyalty and housekeeping. It was they who were the most outraged by a lady journalist's words to the effect that each wife ought to be a good mistress, too. More than a half of the women despise this duty, although some feel that their husbands differ from them on that score. In a very feminine way, they politely avoid discharging this duty and, if their husbands are complacent enough, may live in peace and accord with them "till death do them part." Like Bawcis and Philemon. They even walk hand in hand, even in their declining years.

Men are much more shrewd in this respect. They know their mission and they grieve over their failure to fulfil it with consummate skill. They never admit to that out loud, however – on the contrary, they like to exagerate their deeds. Especially those men who are aware of their inadequacy at the bottom of their hearts. This is understandable, but why the learned men who are supposed to know the human problems succumbed to this delusion?

When he was already in a mature age, one well-known scientist wrote a volume on the problem of divorces which began to be

Drawing by Victor Bogorad

increasingly felt in the Soviet Union starting with 1966 and on the steady growth of moral corruption. He arrived at the conclusion that the main reason for trouble was people's growing political awareness. He quoted some gigantic figure of divorcees part ways because of differences in world outlooks. Here are some particulars. So many percent of divorcees could not put up with the backwardness of their partners who showed no interest in literature, painting and the cinema. So many percent had political differences. That is, they adhered to communist ideology, of course, but differed over little things.

The book by the celebrated scientist was a great success. That was the first work on a subject which could not previously be discussed with scientific authenticity because no moral statistics were published. In general, divorce had not been typical of Soviet society. In this sense, the Soviet people was an example for, say, the American people to follow. Only the moral statistics of 1966 made scientists analyze this frustrating novelty.

Once a newspaper arranged a "round table" discussion on a new subject unusual for those times: why are there so many single men and women? Why, with so many divorcees around, are those who have partaken of married life not willing to re-marry? The editors naively invited to the round table divorce experts, divorced men and women, single men and spinsters. Georgy Vasilchenko – who already regarded himself as a sexologist and did successful research in this field which, however, could not be called at that time by its proper name in print for the sake of decency – was also asked to attend.

All those invited turned up – except for single men, both divorced and as yet unmarried. The notion of a "round table" should not be taken literally. It is only politicians who can sit down around a huge doughhut in a vast hall and look each other in the face across it. The editorial "round table" was an ordinary meeting, with a presidium and all that. Present at the meeting were mostly spinsters, not much for looks and no longer young, who rose to speak one after another and who voiced their firm conviction that many in our country could not start a family only for the reason that the state did not care a damn about giving them a hand. The rest of the participants at the meeting were scientists. It was among them – or, more specifically, between a specialist in the divorce problem and a sexologist, that an argument broke out.

Unfortunately, the sexologist had not read a learned treatise on the intellectual and moral-political discrepancy between the consorts. Preoccupied with the problems of his male and female patients, he started upon learning about the great scientist's conclusions as to divorce causes. Regardless of the numerous ugly spinsters in the audience, he said frankly what he thought about the husbands and wives who did not know why they had joined in wedlock. Looking the divorce expert straight in the eye, he explained, without beating around the bush, that married couples divorced chiefly because of their incompatibility in bed. He gave examples of a street sweeper and a lady professor, a doctor and a truck driver, an electrician and a refined lady scientist, a truck driver and a lady doctor, an electrician and a lady literary critic (a

refined, soft-spoken connoisseur of the heritage of Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko) getting along fine together.

The professor of sociology got very angry. He was bitterly disappointed with the divorcees. However, the sexologist by no means intended to cast aspersions on them. The professor was of the opinion that it was necessary to educate men and women, to call on them to show more interest in literature and art, to learn more about the private lives of the classics of Marxism-Leninism; especially useful, he said, were Karl Marx's letters to Jenny Marx, and Lenin's argument with Klara Zetkin, who was then 75. The sexologist, on the other hand, sought to help them in a different way. He also insisted on education – sex education, that is. He gave many examples of its usefulness. He said that sex education helped solve the problems of many men and women who were not thinking of divorce yet, but who would divorce by all means if not given a helping hand.

The two scientists parted company, thoroughly displeased with one another. However, life brought them together again in a most unexpected way. The professor of sociology had come over from Leningrad for the "round table," which was just an ordinary meeting. He called on the editors and asked them, in jest, to buy him a railway ticket home, because it was at their invitation that he had left his study to attend the meeting. He was in a hurry to get home in time for his wife's birthday, he said. The editors made amends for all the trouble they had given the professor, booking him a first-class sleeper accommodation. A night on wheels dealt a crushing blow to the professor's scientific notions. As he entered his compartment, he saw...

This is not a novel, so I needn't dwell on what he saw, what his comments were, and what the reaction to his comments was. What matters is the result. The man who had opposed divorces and who believed that marriages could be saved by quotations from classics of Marxism-Leninism and from fiction, divorced his wife... By this act he made moral statistics look still worse... The woman he met in the double compartment of a sleeping car bewitched him and compelled him to go back on his principles. The professor moved to Moscow, and is now in his second youth. Enjoying life, he stopped nagging at younger scientists and got down to revising his learned treatise on divorces. Its second edition contained different statistics – and diametrically opposite conclusions.

At that time, theoretical literature on love was scanty. Scantier even than before the year 1913. It was in 1913 or, according to other sources, in 1914, that Professor Chlenov took a sex census of Moscow students and published a book under this title. In those noble times,

Drawing by Victor Bogorad

the professor asked students many shameless questions. And got full answers to them because the questionnaires were anonymous.

The young fools of 1913 and 1914 found themselves in a trap. The anonymity professor Chlenov had promised them turned out to be a hoax. The professor asked young men whether they had ever masturbated, and an appalling 99.9 percent of the answers was "yes." In other words, only one young man per thousand was innocent of that sin. As a matter of fact, the figure 99.9 percent is tentative. It might well be lower by five percent or so, which made only five students out of a hundred candidates for paradise. Among girls, the percentage of innocents is much higher...

More than half a century later, Sergei Golod, a post-graduate student, ventured an act of real courage. He undertook to take a sex census of Moscow and Leningrad students – and succeeded! Anonymity was guaranteed in this case, too. The results were kept secret for a long time. Golod's dissertation was put in the "top secret" category along with the Buran space shuttle at the then mysterious Baikonur cosmodrome which, it seems, is still not to be found on a map.

The defence of the dissertation was announced in the newspaper *Vechernyaya Moskva*. Such announcements, next to those of divorce case hearings, used to appear on that paper's back page (neither do any longer). Sergei Golod's "sex census" drew the interest of the general public, which spelt the end of the over-curious scientist. The announcement caught a big shot's eye: as a result, Golod's capacity audience in the conference hall of the Concrete Sociological Research Institute included not just specialists. The learned council failed to turn up, however. The secretary of the learned council made his appearance on an empty stage and told the audience that Sergei Golod had fallen ill and therefore the defence of the dissertation was called off. The learned secretary's gaze was fixed on one spot. He looked spellbound. Puzzled, many traced his gaze to a young man, obviously a post-graduate, seated in a back row, with rolled up sheets of Whatman paper on his lap. Those who knew him understood that he was precisely the man who was to have defended the dissertation but had suddenly taken ill, and that the rolled up sheets were charts and diagrams commonly used when defending a dissertation. If unfolded, they would have said how many young sinners there were at Moscow and Leningrad Universities, who of them had already discovered the joys of love, how many young men had been disappointed with their choices, and who of them did not think that love was a very important part of life. One of the diagrams showed how many student-age girls did not regard love as essential for good life and did not seek love, considering it an unwanted supplement to their intimate relations with their sexual partners. Other diagrams showed the rate of masturbation – the anonymous pollees had been quite frank with the interviewer.

Still, the findings of the research into intimacy, contained in that undefended dissertation, did find their way into the press. A small-circulation magazine, published in Latvia in Russian, carried the statistics and the diagrams. Moscow learned about that instantly; virtuous middle-aged men were outraged by the vulgarity of it, and wrote letters to the Central Committee of their beloved Party, calling upon it to ban the propagation of those shocking figures, since it was impossible to refute them. The virtuous middle-aged men could not put up with the idea that Soviet young people, the future builders of Communism, began to make love when still in school, instead of solving mathematical problems, doing their homework diligently and studying the history of our socialist Motherland. In general, youth had to be offered a positive example to follow. If some young people started doing it in their school yeas, that was to be lamented and sternly discouraged. In general, parents ought to give more attention to their children's upbringing, to control their behaviour; as for schoolteachers, they ought to have a serious talk with their charges. No mention should be made of masturbation, however. One advocate of high morality gave an example from Swedish life. In that northern country a teacher, upon learning that one of the schoolboys indulged in "self-love,"

foolishly warned the class against the habit with the result that all the boys and girls went in for this vice which goes back to Onan, Judah's impious son. That piece of information was meant to confirm the idea that the darker sides of our life – which, though few, are, unfortunately, undeniable – ought to be kept mum about lest the education of our youth in the communist spirit should suffer.

Amazingly, in Soviet times no one has mentioned in public the word deriving from the name of proud Judah's son, who never married; nevertheless, the word was well-known to the general public; it was used to scare young men, and as a result, the latter suffered and felt like outcasts. It is true, though, that the word appeared in books published in the early years of Soviet power, particularly in Kharkov, which American sexologists later referred to as the birthplace of their science. The books, naive and yellowed by time, changed hands many times and were read, clandestinely, by a multitude of people of various generations. That became clear to one of Moscow's doctors, N. Khodakov, who moved to Moscow recently from Sverdlovsk, where he had had the courage to call himself a sexologist and a sexopathologist openly. In Moscow, he did not venture to disclose his speciality at first and treated alcoholism as part of his research into the effects of alcoholism on male sexual potency. The doctor found out, to his own utter confusion, that vodka detracted nothing from men's sexual prowess. What's more, many young men get an urge to make love precisely after they have downed a few drinks, although old Khrakov sexologists warned their readers not only against masturbation, but against drinking as a cause of impotence as well.

A merger of two sciences suddenly produced an interesting result. Working in a paid clinic, Dr Khodakov secured permission to treat alcoholics anonymously, without checking their identification papers. This encouraged his once tongue-tied patients to speek freely – and to ask questions. What kind of questions do anonymous patients ask, and what are they eager to talk about with a doctor who is a total stranger to them? They discuss themselves, women, love and their problems with women in bed. Suddenly, Khodakov gained a reputation as a doctor capable of effecting miraculous cures for intimate disorders. Sober men began to seek his expert advice and professional help. His fame spread far beyond Moscow. One of his patients, a Kurd truck driver who could barely speak Russian, came over from Tbilisi by train in very low spirits. Ten days later he left Moscow by plane, happy and full of energy. He had no wings of his own, and had to use those of Aeroflot instead.

The doctor wrote a book, in which he described delicate matters in an exquisite and perfectly decent language. The book was a success, and its second edition was more frank. The doctor then wrote another book, going a bit further in his frankness. After that, the doctor's clientele changed: instead of alcoholics he now treated those suffering from other disorders. The doctor was amazed by the knowledge his downcast patients had of the books by old Kharkov scientists. Upon telling the doctor what his complaint was, a patient would, without any apparent connection, confess to masturbation. The doctor had long learned that the Kharkov idea had gripped the public mind, and began to treat a disease with debunking the harmful theory. Every day he would deliver ten to fifteen lectures on one and the same subject to an audience of one. The doctor was supported by science. The sexology and sexopathology laboratory formally recognized as normal many off-beat forms of sexual intercourse between man and woman, and granted an amnesty for lone sinners. What's more, the above-mentioned book, *Quantified Studies of Male Sexual Potency*, actually makes a virtue out of masturbation once regarded as a deadly sin. The following law has been derived arithmetically from a mass of facts: the earlier sex life begins, the longer it lasts. This applies to any form of sex life, even to passionate love for one's own self. The followers of the new theory enthusiastically refer to it as a revelation which will bring relief to repentant sinners.

Nevertheless, the Kharkov school still keeps its grip on most people.

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FROM THE XXth CENTURY POLITICAL THOUGHT

Introduced by *New Times* analyst **Rostislav Zolotaryov**

There are not many countries in the world whose names do not have some geographical or ethnic connotation. Even countries which at one time or other tagged on some specific epithet in the way of an ideological title, like, for example, a "people's" or "socialist" republic, or referred to the state system or structure, such as a "federal republic" or a "united states" did not stray from one definite geographical definition. Take, for instance, the United States of America or the Federal Republic of Germany, or even, though it is not a state, the European Community. In this respect the Soviet Union stands apart, with a name saturated with political ideology.

As far as the "socialist choice" is concerned, that matter seems to have been decided once and for all. Now the second definition – "Soviet," which possesses in addition to its juridical aspect a very definite ideological connotation, is also open to question. In this country of ours, the "Soviet" form of power never existed in its pure, unadulterated state. Generally speaking, first to more consistently promote this form as a "Convention," for example, were the French Jacobins. However, it proved unviable and its details are seldom to be detected except for instance, in confederative and federative formations. However, it was taken up by the Socialists, and implementation of Soviet statehood also followed the struggle against "bourgeois parliamentarism."

However, eventually the outer shell of the "Soviet system," implying the Central Executive Committee chapter preceding the 1936 Constitution, yielded to pseudo-parliamentarianism inasmuch as the way rule was really effected is well known. Subsequently there gained currency the term "Soviet parliamentarianism," which, pro forma, is an unthinkable combination.

The Russian lawyer, sociologist and economist Nikolai Timashev, who prior to the revolution taught at St. Petersburg University and Polytechnic, subjected the "Soviet system" to thorough analysis. In 1921, he was obliged to emigrate, and in the United States in 1932, he became friends with Pitirim Sorokin. An eminent scholar, he earned international recognition. He died in the United States in 1970.

Following are excerpts from his lengthy contribution to the Prague-based *Russky Ekonomichesky Sbornik* (Russian Economic Collection) in Nos 7-12 for 1928-29.

Publication prepared by A.Edemsky

The Soviet system as a medium for coups

Nikolai Timashev (1886-1970)

Anyone giving thought to the destinies of democracy generally and to likely forms of Russia's future democracy specifically, will find the study and analysis of the Soviet system most fascinating. Indeed, from the angle of the overall problem of democracy, the Soviet system is definitely no "new word," for which the opponents of democracy thirst in their desire to replace the democratic ideal. It cannot be such for the simple reason that the very search for a "new word" is illusory. This is so because the crisis of democracy, about which so much is said nowadays, is not so much a crisis of the principle as a crisis of the concrete forms of its implementation. However, each new form, and the Soviet forms are unquestionably new, may furnish a valuable indication of a way out of the crisis...

Even more indisputable is the interest that the Soviet system affords from the angle of the very special problem of Russian democracy. It is common knowledge that the concrete forms democracy assumes in a given country are not infrequently determined to a considerable degree by the forms of the preceding political system: it only takes several circumstantial amendments for a new Russian Constitution to appear. The simplicity with which this matter is resolved is due to the circumstance that the given existing Soviet system, provided we overlook the Russian Communist Party's dictatorship, offers a medium conducive to experimentation by new addicts of "strong" authority.

That the state system currently existing in present-day Russia completely negates democracy is beyond question. This is because in Russia today, even though it is styled "Soviet," the specific vigour of authority, without which the state and law and order cannot exist, is not concentrated in the system of Soviets: it is not "the workers and peasants" who exercise power, which from a certain angle could be regarded as a "working people's democracy." Power actually belongs to that peculiar social creation called the Communist Party. Strictly centralized, strictly disciplined, united by the prestige of its leaders, with severe recruitment which obstructs all inner disintegration, and with a well-conceived plan for "party indoctrination," plus a system of one-time and periodic purges, the Communist Party serves as the backbone sustaining the Soviet system as the technical apparatus, which it is essential to have, insofar as the Soviets have been in effect stripped of that ideological fountain-head of the will of the "working people," which is specifically required for the vigour of authority.

Nor is that "inner Party democracy," so invariably trumpeted at Party conferences and congresses ever since the 10th Congress in 1921, a tangibly existing state system in Russia. It is not the Party membership's opinion, not the mood of the Party majority that in

the final analysis underlies the decisions implemented by the state apparat. It is instead the will and resolve of that central core which has historically evolved within the Party, in other words, that small group with its definite pecking order of Lenin's immediate associates, roughly corresponding to the Party's Political Bureau. The power this group exercises manifests every token of a dictatorship. For this is power "according to our own right," power according to the right of the take-over of October 25, 1917. For this is power that cannot be taken away by any legal means from those who exercise it: indeed, election of the Political Bureau by the Party's Central Committee and, in turn, election of this body by the All-Russian or current All-Union Congress of the Party is nothing more than a fiction, considering the authoritarianism dominating the Party. True, involvement in power is now and again wrested from individual members of the group and vested in new individuals. However, this is done not via the resolve of the Party generally, but via the will of the ruling elite. Finally, this in effect unchanging rule by the Party's central core is not restricted in any way: there is no representative body in the country capable of exercising tangible supervision over the activities of the country's true government: the country has no independent court that could in one or another definite case place in opposition to the will of the government the command of the law, even should this law have been ordained by this government: finally, the country's legislation does not have even a single law to which the dependent judge, who has still not shed his conscience, could timidly turn: inasmuch as the Soviet constitutions have not granted the citizenry subjective public rights, while the citizenry's civil rights are protected by law only as far as are exercised in accordance with their socio-economic designation, or to put it plainly, in accordance with "the government's views."

Power that belongs to a small group of individuals, who rule "according to their own right" and in effect without change, power that is not moderated by anything or anyone, is unreservedly an oligarchic dictatorship.

...Unlike the tyrannies of the ancient Orient or the latter-day European absolute monarchies, with which the contemporary Russian oligarchy is analogous in many respects, the unproductive, unchangeable and unrestricted power of this oligarchy is intensively played down. The power that the Party's central core exercises is covered up by countless "Soviet" bodies, which actually, conjointly with local Party organizations, the trade unions, the sundry "volunteer associations," and the like add up to that highly intricate technical and partly decorative apparat of government...

The state organization that the Soviet constitutions specify never operated at all, for even when the Soviets were still "without the Communists," or at least without a Communist, at that time Bolshevist, majority, they did not exercise power. But when they did acquire such power, moreover, not by their own efforts, but as a gift bestowed by the power-usurping leaders of the Communist Party, they were ousted at once. Yet it is unquestionably true that wherever the concept of the "free Soviets" is viable to a certain degree, the decline of the Party oligarchy ought to be attended by a tendency to reform the actual Soviet system to accord with its ideal objective. Accordingly, to give thought to the problem of a state of free Soviets from the angle of a democratic world outlook implies in concrete terms to ascertain what changes should be introduced in the Soviet system that is revived when the Party collapses, if possible in the spirit of its ideal objective, so that this system becomes democratic and viable.

To resolve the problem of democratizing the Soviet system, what is necessary first is to ascertain in which respect this system in its tangibly existing shape conflicts with the democratic ideal... The principle of democracy is violated firstly by the very existence of authority which rules in accordance with its own right, and which cannot be changed except by a *coup*...

The principle of freedom is violated, firstly, by the absence of so-called subjective public rights, more specifically, the absence of those "freedoms," without whose presence an outwardly perfect constitutional machinery is but a sham, as it does not put authority under the control of public opinion; meanwhile freedom of the press is trammelled by pre-censorship, and the freedom of assembly and union is incompatible with the permissive system that Soviet legislation has adopted...

There is one more difference. In the Soviet system, unification of the entire people in one electorate, subdivided only according to a territorial pattern, which is the acceptable thing in contemporary democracies, yields to a peculiar system expressed in professional representation.

> The dispersal of power among the Soviets and the concentration in the Party's hands of government leverage makes the Soviet system conducive to coups d'etat

To sum up, the Soviet system, even reformed as mentioned above, does not accord with any of the historically known types of democracy. This, though, does not mean simply that it could be non-democratic... Whereas democracy is specifically implemented only in the given forms, there is, on the other hand, nothing to prove that further development could not introduce new forms. A reformed Soviet system could be one such new form.

To sum up, a Soviet form of democracy is theoretically conceivable. But would it be viable? Would it not be, by virtue of its inner weakness, merely a transition period to a new dictatorship?..

In the actually existing Soviet system, only the outer shell of the concept of "the state ascendant structure is left. The system has been deprived of its pivot, that of election, which at the lower level has been outsted by a pitiful parody, and which in the middle and higher echelons is barely covered up by appointment in the form of the solemn "acceptance" of the list offered by the Communist faction, i.e., a branch of the governmental apparat.

The ideal pattern will specify more changes. Indeed, there follows from the very concept of the primacy of the local Soviets the logical need to invest them with broad powers that would approximate the powers of the state as a whole. Experience soon demonstrated that similar powers should be invested in the middle and higher echelons integrating the local Soviets. Consequently, anyone can do anything, and this hopeless confusion of materially competent bodies at all levels is indeed represented in the appropriate legislation. The chaos that this generated was gradually overcome by giving bodies closer to the centre more power over bodies on the periphery...

How the ruling party settled the issue is common knowledge: it made the Soviet pattern more complicated by introducing the principle of the two-fold subordination of the technical apparatus, by means of which each link in this apparatus is subject not only to the Soviets operating on this same level, but also to the administrative echelon of the immediate higher body. In practice, this second line of subordination, which is incompatible with the concept of the ascendant state structure, prevailed.

Expressed in the processes indicated was not only the domination of the centralized Communist Party, but also a quite healthy tendency towards implementation of the elementary prerequisites of statehood. However, the form this resurgence assumed is far removed from the objective of immediate democracy, which the

Soviet system seeks to approach. The entire system of executive bodies in Russia today is subordinate in their full sequence to the central government...

Though one cannot assert that transmutation of a state structured according to the ascendant pattern into a fully centralized state is inevitable, the alternative of the state's disintegration or a repeated evolution, should the experiment is repeated, is practically unquestionable...

The organization of authority that is characteristic of each rung in the Soviet system rests mainly on that very same idea of direct rule via popularly elected deputies which underlies the principle of "the ascendant power structure." This organization has as its constructive principle a confusion of authorities carried to the extreme: in the Soviet state, there is no discrimination whatever between legislative and governmental authorities, inasmuch as the Soviets, their congresses, their executive committees and their presidiums simultaneously enact legislation and govern; as for judicial bodies, though gradually extruded into a special complex of institutions, they have nothing of the independence which comprises "judicial authority."

In the practical implementation of the Soviet constitutions... the primacy of popular representation has been replaced by that of governmental authority...

Imagine that the Party's dictatorship has collapsed. Would it then be conceivable to see intact the structure actually obtaining power, especially as regards its top echelons? We shall doubtless have to answer this question in the negative, inasmuch as the principles of diffusion and replacement make this system absolutely unviable... Retention of the centrally established complex of bodies in the Soviet state without their unification by the Political Bureau is as unthinkable as would be the full retention of the apparatus of an autocratic monarchy without the autocrat himself. Hence, to have "free Soviets" it will be essential to considerably restructure the established system of the central bodies. When discussing how the viability of Soviet democracy could be sustained should the Party's dictatorship collapse, we would find ourselves in a different situation that if we were to debate the issue of the ascendant state structure. There, in the context of an ideal Soviet objective, we discern an original idea, moreover, not without a certain value, which it would be quite appropriate to put to use. Here, though we discern an original construction which scarcely deserves to be imitated...

The true strength it, that is the Soviet government, enjoys depends mostly on the presence of a thus far reliable GPU apparatus and on the denial of all individual rights. In general, the link between the strength of the authority and its uncontrolled exercise is largely preconceived bias. There have been no small number of autocratic monarchies whose uncontrolled sway was maximized, which collapsed because of weak rule. On the other hand, there have been no small number of parliamentary states that manifested, even at the time of great wars, an exceptional tenacity of power. Strength is, of course, a welcome token of power, and more specifically, it in no way conflicts with the notion of democratic government. On the other hand, strength is not and cannot be the one and only token of authority according to its designation: should the strength of authority be purchased at too great a price, it should be declined. As for the price of the Soviet government's "strength," that is too well known...

Full retention of the established complex of central bodies would make the entire system unviable, even in the absence of the Political Bureau. Meanwhile, restoration of the "convention system" as embodied in the ideal Soviet pattern would also make the viability of Soviet democracy questionable in Russia's conditions. Further, partial correction of the system with the purpose of maintaining the primacy of governmental authority would preserve its undemocratic character...

The following theses may be derived from the previously cited facts and ideas. One option open to Russia, by no means the only one and not necessarily the most welcome, is the emergence of a democracy in a new Soviet form that history has never known. Such a democracy would far from dovetail with the state system arising should the Party's dictatorship be felled in one way or another, and should the system the Soviet Constitution expresses be brought to life. This last system would call for significant reforms both to democratize it and simply to stabilize it...

> As an ideal, the Soviet version of democracy is of interest, but in practice, such structures more often than not degenerate into dictatorship

A full tie-up of political collegiums would impart to the state a peculiar outer structure, are borrowed from the Soviets, coupled with an original internal substance from the point of its approximation to immediate democracy. However, in other respects much may be retained, indeed, should be retained, of the "Soviets"; thus, it is quite likely that there will be a multiplicity or rather duality of central representative collegiums: also likely are a collegiate structure of top governmental authority, an approximation to professional representation in the organization of municipal elections, etc.

However, it is quite conceivable that the indicated essential reforms that are required to construct a state of "free Soviets" will not be implemented and that the said state will approximate to a greater extent than planned the Soviet system as actually existing or ideally projected. Should the reforms of the first category not be implemented, the new state structure will remain undemocratic. Should the reforms of the second category not be implemented, the new democracy will be doomed, which it is particularly important to emphasize. A democratic state is not a state without an authority, but a state with a definitely structured authority. However, the nature of power conforms to its own particular laws, which nobody may violate with impunity. Many such violations are threaded deliberately or not in the texts of the Soviet constitutions. Should a democracy seek to adapt Soviet forms to its ideal, it must press for modification not only of what directly infringes upon this ideal, but also what makes the system unable to function. Should it conduct itself otherwise, it will perhaps involuntarily but absolutely unquestionably play into the hands of its enemies. Soviet democracy is acceptable either as the final form over the foreseeable future, if it proves capable of inner improvement, or as a transition to another better form, about which we already know or which has yet to be discovered. On the other hand, it will be unacceptable if it serves merely as preparation for the usurpation of power by some new "ruling selection," that is, ruling elite. In such a case a system paving the way for a new dictatorship would be an overly slavish copy of the system of "free Soviets" as reflected in the Soviet Constitution.

Not long ago, Doctor of Sciences (Law), Prof. **Rein Müllerson** lectured the students of Moscow State University on international law that at that time did not yet extend to his native Estonia. He wrote articles for the press, for example, for *New Times*. Now he has been appointed deputy Foreign Minister of the Estonian Republic.

When Müllerson was leaving for Tallinn, his colleagues in Moscow, where he headed the International Law Section of the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of State and Law, and in Geneva, where he often came to as a member of the UN Human Rights Committee, expressed their wish that he should not stay too long on diplomatic work. The deputy minister himself foresees that he is going to work in his new capacity "for a long time, but in any case not for the rest of my life."

Last spring Estonian Communists sent some documents to the European Conference of Foreign Ministers in Berlin in which it was stated that the Baltic republics were moving towards totalitarian fascist regimes. At that time Müllerson did not deny that some provisions in Estonian legislation were at odds with the international standards on human rights. But according to him, the unsatisfactory situation of national minorities in the republic resulted from the unsettled yet pivotal question of Estonia's status.

Now that no one calls into question the status of the Republic, the creation of a mechanism for the respect of the Estonians' rights in Russia and the Russians' rights in Estonia should be put on the agenda. This issue plus the elaboration of the new Eastern policy will become in the nearest future Müllerson's main priority. For the time being Estonian draft law on citizenship is much tougher on the non-indigenous population than those of Latvia and Lithuania.

In his new Tallinn office the diplomat feels rather independent. He knows that at any time he can return to a more quiet academic job in Moscow, Tallinn, Geneva or even New York where he was invited to teach in the local university.

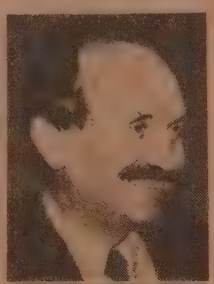
* * *

Do coup d'etats influence sports records? *New Times* did not get any information about rounds and races, but received reports about clashes during the quarter-final matches among the contenders for the world chess championship that took place during the days of August in Brussels. The 31-year-old Moscow grand master **Artur Yusupov** managed to defeat one of the contest's main favourites, Vassily Ivanchuk, 22, from Lvov (*NT* wrote about him in No. 13/91).

After six games Ivanchuk was in the lead with the score 3,5 : 2,5, and in the seventh game that was played on August 20 he escaped defeat only by some miracle: his opponent acci-

Presidential aspirants

On December 1, the Ukraine will hold its first presidential election ever. The preparations for it are already in progress. Two candidates for the post of the president have been registered: Leonid Kravchuk, Chairman of the Ukrainian Parliament, and **Vyacheslav Chornovil,** one of the founders of the Ukrainian Helsinki Union and the Rukh. All others – some 90-plus people – for the time being have only the status of aspirants to presidential candidacy. Among them are **Yuri Shcherbak,** Chairman of the Green Party and Minister of the Protection of the Environment, **Leopold Taburyansky,** People's Deputy of the Republic and member of the Ukrainian People's Party, and Academician **Igor Yukhnovsky,** leader of the parliamentary opposition and member of the presidium of the Republic's Supreme Soviet.



Vyacheslav Chornovil has received over half of the votes of the members of the Rukh's Big Rada (Rukh's Congress), although his opponent, Levko Lukyanenko, has also received a lot of votes, including those of Ivan Drach, the Rukh's Chairman, and Mikhail Gorynya, his first deputy.

Chornovil thinks that after the putsch events the chances of the democratic forces and their candidates have increased significantly. In the past he counted on no more than 15 percent of the votes. In addition to Rukh, his candidature has received the backing of the Association of Democratic Councils and the Peasants' Democratic Party.

"The mere fact that the democratic candidates will be on Leonid Kravchuk's heels is going to make him act more resolutely in the building of an independent state, should he actually be elected," thinks Chornovil.

The 57-year-old Yuri Shcherbak is known in the republic not only as a political figure, but also as a writer. He began his active life as a sanitary inspector. Today he has an MD degree. His most popular work is the documentary book *Chernobyl.* He headed the Green Light movement and is the founder and leader of the Green Party. It is not important who will win, declares Shcherbak, "if only the power does not fall into the hands of extremists and adventurers. For it is not the president himself, but rather his team that could prove dangerous."

At present Yuri Shcherbak does not have enough time to pursue his career as a writer, although he has a commission for the book *Two Years in the Kremlin* about his experience as a deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet. He defines his main goal in a rather simple way: to build a sovereign Ukraine. As the Minister, he has already worked out a plan for the protection of the environment in the Republic: the control over all industrial enterprises and the creation of a biospheric international park comprising a part of the Ukrainian, Polish and Slovak Carpathians.

The People's Deputy of the Ukraine, Leopold Taburyansky, is supported first of all by his party, the People's Party of the Ukraine, that for the time being has slightly over 4,000 members. He comes out in favour of privatization, the abolition of state ownership and creation of privately and collectively owned businesses. The main idea of his programme: in order to raise the living standard it is necessary to create favourable enterpreneurial conditions. He thinks that in a free Ukraine the Communist Party can also exist.

Igor Yukhnovsky asserts that all the Ukraine's misfortunes are the result of the incompetence of the government. As the Chairman of the People's Rada, he wants to create in parliament a political majority capable of carrying out the overhaul of the executive power. As for the presidential race that he has joined, he is convinced that one could hardly find a more inopportune time for it. "The problem of building an independent Ukraine is so important that the problem of presidential elections simply cannot be compared with it."

dentally committed an incomprehensible blunder in the winning position. According to Yusupov's coach, international master Mark Dvoretsky, Artur lost his chance because of the dramatic reports that were coming from Moscow. But when by the evening of August 21 it became clear that the putsch in Moscow had failed, Artur became filled with great enthusiasm, felt completely at ease and began to play more agressively and boldly. The eighth game played on August 22 and the following two additional games were conducted by him so brilliantly that the spectators and chess old hands were enraptured.

Having won a victory, Yusupov, now in the semi-finals, is gearing up for the match with the Dutchman Jan Timman. Like the game of the other two semi-finalists, the former world champion Anatoly Karpov and the young Englishman Nigel Short, this match will take place in 1992. Astrologers predict a repetition of the coup in that year.

D.Plisetsky

* * *

The first lady of France, President Mitterrand's wife **Danielle Mitterrand,** has been awarded an international prize by the International Press Institute for her contribution to the struggle for the respect of human rights in the world. She has founded and become the president of the Paris-based human rights organization Fondation France-Libertés which is absolutely independent from the country's president and is outside his control.

Danielle Mitterrand has decided that her main concern is the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities. Last year alone, she visited the refugee camps near the Iran-Iraq border, and also in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

"One may look defiant when in this world of violence he decides to devote all his energy to the struggle for human rights. Especially when he also asserts that the only way to make people's lives better is to advocate such universal human values as respect for each other, solidarity and comity of nations," says Danielle. "This is my choice."

* * *

"I first became acquainted with your magazine some time ago: once I noticed it in one of the libraries in my country. Now, living in Moscow, I regularly receive *New Times* in Russian and English. The weekly is interesting and I read it with

pleasure. I would like to note the high professional level of your journalists," says the press and culture attaché and the third secretary of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Soviet Union, **Gilles Beschoor Plug.**

He is 28 and was born in Amsterdam. Gilles graduated from Rotterdam University with the diploma of a jurist. He knows several Western languages. Some time ago he decided to study Russian, and today he is one of the few Dutchmen who can speak fairly good Russian. G.B.Plug began his diplomatic career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. Over his roughly two-year stay in Moscow he has helped to establish contacts between several Dutch and Soviet museums and organize exhibitions of artists, he is maintaining contacts with the correspondents of Dutch mass media accredited to Moscow and is helping Soviet citizens who come to the Dutch Embassy for consultations.

Gilles Beschoor Plug thinks that the organization and holding by the Embassy of a number of activities in connection with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Soviet Union that will be celebrated next year provides the stimulus for a greater number of people in the Netherlands and the Soviet Union to know more about each other.

A.Kun

Uygur from Alma-Ata

During the Moscow Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, for the first time in many years they began to talk in the USSR about the fate of Soviet Uygurs and the actual situation with human rights in Xinjiang. And the editor-in-chief of the samizdat newspaper *Golos Vostochnogo Turkestana* that is illegally published in Alma-Ata **Yusupbeck Mukhlisi,** 71, has devoted all his life to the struggle for the independence of his people and his native land – the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in China.

In 1943 Yusupbeck headed the committee for the struggle against the regime of Chiang Kai-Shek in Xinjiang. For this activity the future classic of Uygur literature spent two years in a Kuomintang torture-chamber. The Communists' ascent to power has changed little in the fate of Yusupbeck. In the late 1950s he was again sent to prison. The charges against him were traditional: inciting national hatred and propagandizing Islam. In 1960 Mukhlisi escaped from prison and emigrated to the USSR. In the meantime, they began to struggle in Xinjiang not only for freedom, but also against the nuclear testing in the atmosphere that the Chinese government began to conduct in this region in 1964.

But in his new native land his activity was also viewed with great suspicion. According to the Union and the Republican party officials, Mukhlisi "undermined the development of Soviet-Chinese relations." Hence when in 1979 he and his associates started the underground publication of a newspaper and two years later founded the National Front for the Liberation of the Eastern Turkestan, their activity right away came under the close scrutiny first of the Republican and then the Union law enforcement bodies. Up until 1985 Yusupbeck was constantly summoned to the Alma-Ata KGB office where they demanded that he close the newspaper and stop his political activity.

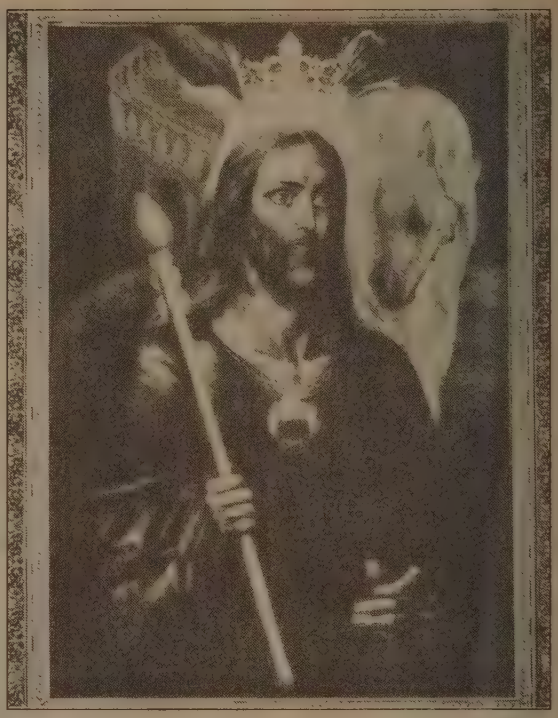
With the advent of *perestroika* he is no longer summoned to the KGB or the Procurator's Office. But little has changed in the strategy of the authorities: if in the past they were fighting against the Soviet Uygurs openly, today, according to Mukhlisi, they simply try to ignore their activity and protests. All Yusupbeck's attempts to meet with the President of Kazakhstan have so far been futile. Letters with the request to help these people continue to lie unanswered in the office of the USSR President. In the USSR, mainly in Kazakhstan, there live several hundred thousand people who come from Eastern Turkestan and, according to Mukhlisi's data, in Xinjiang proper – 25 million.

Meanwhile, the world community sympathizes with Mukhlisi's struggle for the freedom of his people. On more than one occasion the Chairman of the National Front has been invited to conferences and meetings in the FRG, Saudi Arabia and Turkey where they discussed the problems of his native land.

Alexander Chudodeyev

A challenge to good taste

Alexander Rekunenko – a most controversial comtemporary painter



World Redeemer. By Alexander Rekunenko. Oil on canvas, 1991

After Russia's revolution religious art was separated from the state and only master craftsmen created lacquered miniatures, carrying forward the unexcelled artistry of the icon painters of the Royal Workshops. No wonder, as the applied arts attracted ideologues less and thus, the lacquered painted casket served as the sole medium that inherited not only the technique, but also the spiritual tradition of prerevolutionary Russian art.

However, now the techniques of lacquered painting are reverting to the mainstream of art. We see evolving one of the more fascinating trends consonant with national tradition. What is perhaps radical here is the total detachment not only from modern aesthetics but also from the modern philosophy of art.

As the twentieth century comes to a close, Russia's art may take as unexpected a turn as it did at the beginning of the century. Again the changes will be profound and will influence the mainstays of the Weltanschauung. The essential aspect here is the transition from revolutionary to a normal conservative mentality, which in the domain of art implies restoration of the picture of the world, or in other words, reconciliation with the world.

To dispute or defend the new forms of art that the 20th century brought into being is absolutely futile, inasmuch as new forms arise of themselves by virtue of new demands and objectives. Society today has an immence need to have the traditional spiritual values returned and this naturally spells restoration in the domain of art as well. The art salon has come to symbolize this development.

In the 19th century, within the context of Russia's spectacular floruit, paintings such as *The Last Day of Pompeii, The Boyarinya Morozova,* and the *Appearance of Christ Before the People* were social highlights. Craftsmanship was of little significance with the very term "art" acquiring a broader meaning implying its purposeful impact upon viewers.

In the Russian tradition art's spiritual impact was always appreciated more than the aesthetic import. Pictures were painted to bring home lofty ideas that would morally elevate the viewer. Customarily associated with the Russian artistic tradition is its spiritual character, or to be more exact, its **divine nature,** not any definite style.

However, spiritual art requires a definite form. Reverently abiding by the image of the world's creation it is absolutely incompatible with the aesthetic licence of the avant-garde. We have here not a matter of taste, but the issue of a life philosophy.

It was not fortuitous that over the revolutionay chapter of our history the avant-garde scored the most signal artictic achievements. Even today the overwhelming majority of art lovers adhere to this view. However, the rules of the game have changed and today one may anticipate peaks in the art that resurrects Russia's spiritual traditions.

Soon to be published is a book about the young Moscow painter Alexander Rekunenko, one of most controversial figures of the new generation. It will be entitled *The Divine Art of Russia.*

This man's foremost achievements are reminiscent of the lacquered miniatures of Fedoskino master craftsmen who, unlike their Palekh colleagues, employ oils instead of tempera. Yet it must be noted that what appears to be aesthetically acceptable in casket decor is most unusual, even shocking, in a painting.

Rekunenko had a nine-years apprenticeship, including a full course at the Institute of Artistic Technology, where he studied icon painting, lacquered miniatures, and the academic technique of the old masters. Inciden-

Leda. Oil on canvas, 1990

tally, this is the only establishment promoting a type of painting that calls for many layers or coatings and which is to be found today only in the lacquered miniature. Hence, the technique that Rekunenko employs may definitely be termed archaic. However, to simply carry it over from casket decoration into painting would have been ineffective. Consequently, to revive and modernize this art form an unorthodox philosophical approach was needed.

The painter's basic idea is that with the passage of time art's aesthetic aspect ages and hence cannot be imitated. In the world of art tradition is a spiritual, not aesthetic, concept. Rekunenko seeks to restore the spiritual link with Russia's painters of the past by addressing himself to the ideas underlying Russia's national self-awareness.

The salient feature of his works is a religious character in the broadest sense, which, however, is manifested not by the subject matter, but by manner. Even the layman will realize the extreme technical subtlety needed, which Rekunenko himself termes a "supereffort." He believes this to be the natural manifestation of the lofty religiously minded spirit, claiming that, "The Baptist will operate his lathe better than the atheist because he works not for himself, but for a higher ideal."

At the exhibition of modern American realism in Moscow's Central Show Rooms last year, experts noted that the technique was of a different quality than in Soviet art. However, it was absolutely obvious that technique alone was not responsible. Evidently at the root was a different philosophy.

In the final analysis, the differences are expressed in both the mode of life and the levels of economic prosperity the latter being unthinkable without superexertion. Indeed, there is a directly dependent link between the divine character of 19th century Russian art and Russia's then spectacular economic advancement.

Hopefully the increased traditional philosophically religious orientation in present-day Russian art heralds a new national upswing...

In all likelihood Rekunenko's most noteworthy achievement is that he has overcome the absolutely amorphous character of what is called Soviet Realism, which definitely had no spiritual basis at all. By comparison, Rekunenko's efforts are more reminiscent of 19th century Symbolism, and no wonder, as many see his paintings as "German-like," as harsh and displaying a characteristic inner vigour.

Yet the same spiritual obsession is characteristic of those great efforts of Alexander Ivanov and Vasili Surikov, whom Rekunenko so adores. He is of the view that the artist paints his picture in his mind before he picks up his brush. In the same manner as the celebrated Paganini ceased rehearsing a few days before a concert, thereby accumulating inner strength which he would subsequently give his audience, the artist "gives" his painting only after it matures within him as it were.

It is quite possible that notwithstanding his frankly art-salon aesthetic Rekunenko is a present-day version of Russian Symbolism, which is again coming into favour, partly as a reaction to the monopoly of a realism that robbed art of its ties with the world of lofty ideas. In 20th century art the avant-garde morally abolished both Symbolism, and the art salon. However, today it would appear that the avant-garde with its destructive fervour is itself becoming morally inacceptable.

Rekunenko's efforts are more than controversial. They annoy the advocates of good taste in art. However, this good taste has largely been monopolized by mediocrity, which fears like the devil himself overstepping the bounds of the universally acknowledged. In that sense Rekunenko's efforts are undoubtedly outside of good taste, as is almost everything beyond the golden mean. However, as an exteme in the tendency of artistic restoration they are already of indubitable interest.

Prevalent today is an intellectual attitude to painting due to the impact of the 20th century. However, Rekunenko's paintings fail here as they are of that currently rare, almost extinct type that one involuntarily seeks to "devour" with one's own eyes.

The artist himself says that his works are "magnetic," and indeed, it is impossible to ignore them, which primarily explains their competitve nature.

In the long run the merits of such painting will depend on how aptly it accords with the modern demand for spiritual rejuvenation. Will art be able to halt that anarchic self-destruction into which we have plunged ourselves? And what sort of art will it be?

Logic fails to supply the answer. Thus far the history of art has been not a straight line and there is nothing supernatural at all in its periodic throwbacks.

Alexander Rekunenko's doubtlessly stirring art, which inwardly is uncustomarily profound and outwardly paradoxically beautiful, symbolizes the qualitative changes in Russian art at the close of the 20th century. Let us rather trust our intuition and discard those speculative stereotypes which prevent us from immersing ourselves in this art, as quite likely that will indicate the new trend.

Yelena Pivovarova,
art director, Manezh Gallery

The idea of European unification inches its way along

The finale of the Youth Meets Europe competition in the Italian region Veneto

A gondola carrying an all-European youth flag took part in the famous Venetian regatta

Some 500 young people from 24 European countries – winners in the international competition organized by the Italian television RAI–recently gathered in Jesolo, 40 kilometres away from Venice. Jesolo is a beautiful health resort. During the holiday season its 27,000 inhabitants provide services for half a million guests from all corners of the world. The town has obviously been built by a man who admires simplicity: an unbroken line of hotels stretches along the sea coast; a second line consists of shops and restaurants, and a third line of living quarters, not huts, of local residents. It is practically impossible to lose the way even after a very long tasting of Venetian wines.

The Youth Meets Europe competition was first held in 1980 as a kind of advertising supplement to the RAI broadcast in which the listeners were invited to express their opinions about life in a united Europe. Contributions could be sent in the form of essays, articles or even songs, verses and drawings. A total of 1,300 young people responded to the call.

During the last ten years the competition has not petered out. Instead, it has become an international event. This year over two million citizens of a future united Europe, Albania and the Soviet Union included, said "yes" to the idea, which evokes nightmares in the minds of statesmen even on the threshold of epoch-making 1992, the year when the borders between the Common Market countries are to be eliminated.

Mario Pinzauti, president of the European Radio and Television Community and the founding father of the competition, stressed that thanks to the mass media 100 million Europeans shared the idea of the competition. "We can be satisfied with this figure," Pinzauti added and, with a truly Italian lightness, began to build castles in the air, beautiful ones like those on San Marco square in Venice.

"We can gather five to six or even ten million votes in favour of European integration," Mario Pinzauti went on, "and bring the audience and indirect participants in the competition up to 200 or 300 million. It would a plebiscite, not a competition."

The idea, which originated in 1980, yields good fruit. Young Europeans, under 25 years of age, think over the history of their respective countries, their specific features and affinity to other countries, and the significance of European integration for culture and arts.

In some countries young people are not yet ready to take part in the competition. France keeps apart from the event, and few people have joined it so far in Britain. But in small Greece 100,000 young people took part in the competition. About 60,000 boys and girls joined the competition in the Soviet Union, mainly at the call of the Yunost (Youth) radio station and the Russian radio. They wanted to win and go to Jesolo.

Only ten of them went, however. It turned out on the last day that the Russian radio and television could not compete with the Union State Committee for Television and Radio in the struggle for air tickets. It's a pity that the Russian participants could not go. The sponsors of the competition would like very much to see a beautiful girl who in her essay described the last night she spent with a young man emigrating from the Soviet Union. The theme of unification and separation was depicted in great detail...

Pinzauti told journalists that, having learned about the putsch on August 19, he seriously thought of cancelling the Jesolo meeting. Dictatorship in the Soviet Union would mean a new iron curtain, not the elimination of borders. In this sense those who erected barricades around the Russian parliament building voted for a Europe without frontiers...

The organizers of the competition and the authorities of the Veneto region demonstrated unsurpassed hospitality. Boys and girls made an excursion to Venice, Murano, an island of glassblowers, and to Verona. "For never was a story of more woe." These words come to mind at the mention of Verona. True, disappointment awaited the romantic champions of European unification at the house in which Juliet had supposedly lived. The cynism of some people, especially tourists, does not have limits either. Contemporary Romeos aged from 20 to 90 cheerfully posed before cameras clinging to the statue of Juliet and grasping her bronze breast polished by the hands of their numerous predecessors...

The speeches made by delegations lasted no more than several jours. Perhaps it was reasonable, because conference-hall diplomacy was not needed. However, some European weaknesses became apparent even during this short time. For instance, Czechs and Slovaks spoke separately at the forum. Bulgarians told the delegates that because of the civil war in Yugoslavia they had to pass through Romania, Hungary and Austria. The notes of poor relatives invited to a ball were distinctly heard in the speeches of delegates from the "countries of victorious democracy." "Under communism the Czechs were closer to Asia than to Europe," a Czech complained." "Let Europe be mother, not step-mother, for Bulgarians, for our children are just the same as yours," a Bulgarian said.

But, on the whole, it was a nice gathering. The Jesolo meeting can probably be regarded as a new step towards shaping staunch Europeans. A decision was made to spread the experience of holding "classes of integrated Europe" which had already been introduced in Veneto schools. Most likely, winners of the competition will make a trip from Rome to the northern frontiers of the USSR. They will evidently be able to judge better the advantages of unification and the disadvantages of a break-up...

Lev Yelin

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